Rulings pertaining to Ramadan

A Collection of Works by
Sheikh Muhammad Salih Al-Munajjid

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Fasting

by

Sheikh Muhammad Salih Al-Munajjid

Introduction

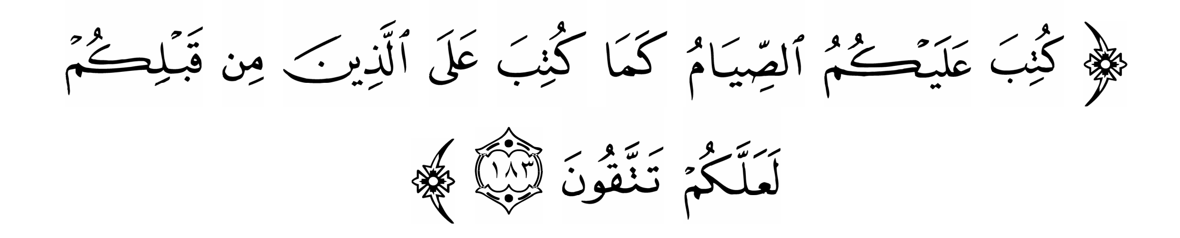
Praise be to Allaah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evil of our own selves and from our evil deeds. Whomsoever Allaah guides cannot be misled, and whomsoever He leaves astray cannot be guided. I bear witness that there is no god except Allaah alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

Allaah has blessed His slaves by assigning for them certain seasons of goodness in which hasanaat (rewards for good deeds) are multiplied, sayyi`aat (bad deeds) are forgiven, people's statuses are raised and the hearts of believers turn to their Master. Those who purify themselves attain success and those who corrupt themselves fail. Allaah has created His slaves to worship Him, as He says:



> **"And I (Allaah) created not the jinns and humans except that they should worship Me (Alone)."** [Surah adh-Dhaariyaat 51:56]

One of the greatest acts of worship is fasting, which Allaah has made obligatory on His slaves. He (ﷻ) says:



"Observing al-siyaam (the fast) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-muttaqoon (the pious)." [Surah al-Baqarah 2:183]

Allaah encourages His slaves to fast:

﴿ وَأَن تَصُومُوا۟ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ١٨٤ ﴾

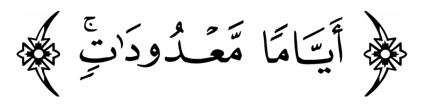
"… And that you fast, is better for you, if only you know." [Surah al-Baqarah 2:184]

He guides them to give thanks to Him for having made fasting obligatory on them:



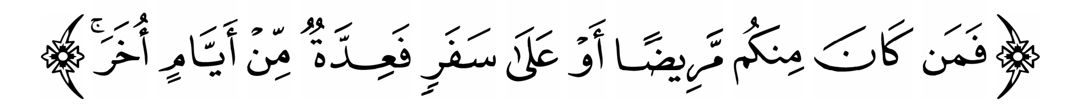
"… that you should magnify Allaah for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him." [Surah al-Baqarah 2:185]

He has made fasting dear to people and has made it easy for them so that they do not find it too difficult to give up their habits and what they are accustomed to. Allaah says:



"…for a fixed number of days…" [Surah al-Baqarah 2:184]

He has mercy on them and keeps them away from difficulties and harm, as He says:



"… but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days…" [Surah al-Baqarah 2:184]

It is no wonder then that in this month, the hearts of the believers turn to their Most Merciful Lord, fearing Him above them, and hope to attain His reward and the great victory [of Paradise].

As the status of this act of worship is so high, it is essential to learn the ahkaam (rulings) pertaining to this month of fasting so that Muslims will know what is obligatory in order to do it, what is haraam (forbidden) in order to avoid it, and what is permissible so that they do not unnecessarily subject themselves to any hardship by depriving themselves from it.

This book is a summary of the rulings, etiquette and Sunnah of fasting. May Allaah make it of benefit to myself and my Muslim brothers. Praise be to Allaah, Lord of the Worlds.

The Definition of Siyaam (Fasting)

(1) Linguistically, siyaam in Arabic means abstinence. In Islamic terminology, it means abstainingfrom things that break the fast, from dawn until sunset, having first made the intention (niyyah) to do so.

The Ruling concerning Fasting

(2) The Ummah (Islamic nation) is in agreement to the fact that fasting the month of Ramadan is obligatory, the evidence for which is in the Qur`aan and Sunnah. Allaah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣ ﴾

"O you who believe! Observing al-sawn (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-muttaqoon (the pious)." [Surah al-Baqarah 2:183]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Islam is built on five [pillars]…"[1]

…among which he mentioned fasting in Ramadan.[2]

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[1] Al-Bukhaari.

[2] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, 1/49.

Whoever breaks the fast during Ramadan without a legitimate excuse has committed a serious major sin, The Prophet (ﷺ) said when describing a dream that he had seen:

> **"…until I was at a mountain where I heard loud voices. I asked, 'What are these voices?' They said, 'This is the howling of the people of Hellfire.' Then I was taken [to another place], and I saw people hanging from their hamstrings with the corners of their mouths torn and dripping with blood. I said, 'Who are these?' They said, 'The people who broke their fast before it was the proper time to do so (i.e., before the time of breaking fast).' "**[3]

Al-Haafidh al-Dhahabi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said,

> "Among the believers it is well-established that whoever does not fast in Ramadan without a valid excuse is worse than an adulterer or drunkard; they doubt whether he is even a Muslim at all, and they regard him as a heretic and profligate."

Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyyah] (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

> "If a person does not fast in Ramadan knowing that it is haraam but making it halaal (permissible) for himself to do so, he must be executed; and if he does it because he is immoral [but believes it is haraam (impermissible)], then he must be punished for not fasting."[4]

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[3] Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/420.

[4] Majmoo' al-Fataawaaa, 25/265.

The Virtues of Fasting

(3) The virtues of fasting are great indeed, and one of the things reported in authentic (saheeh) ahaadeeth is that Allaah has chosen fasting for Himself, and He will reward it and multiply the reward without measure, as He says [in a Hadeeth Qudsi[5]]:

> **"Except for fasting which is only for My sake, and I will reward him for it."**[6]

- Fasting has no equal[7], and the du'aa (supplication) of the fasting person will not be refused.[8]

- The fasting person has two moments of joy: one when he breaks his fast, and one when he meets his Lord and rejoices over his fasting[9].

- Fasting will intercede for a person on the Day of Judgment and will say,

> **"O Lord, I prevented him from his food and physical desires during the day, so let me intercede for him."**[10]

- The smell that comes from the mouth of a fasting person is more beloved to Allaah than the scent of musk.[11]

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[5] **Hadeeth Qudsi:** a hadeeth which the Prophet (ﷺ) narrates from Allah exactly what He said. It differs from the Qur`an in that it is not recited, and it differs from a regular hadeeth in that the words themselves are revealed and not just the meanings.

[6] Al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 1904; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/407.

[7] Al-Nasaa`i, 4/165; Saheeh at-Targheeb, 1/413.

[8] Reported by al-Bayhaqi, 3/345; al-Silsilat al-Saheehah, 1797.

[9] Reported by Muslim, 2/807.

[10] Reported by Ahmad, 2/174. Al-Haythami classed its isnaad as hasan in al-Majma', 3/181. See also Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/411.

- Fasting is a protection and a strong fortress that keeps a person safe from the Fire.[12]

- Whoever fasts one day for the sake of Allaah, Allaah will remove his face a distance of seventy years from the Fire.[13]

- Whoever fasts one day seeking the pleasure of Allaah, if that is the last day of his life, he will enter Paradise.[14]

- **"In Paradise there is a gate called al-Rayyaanthrough which those who fast will enter, and no one will enter through it except them; when they have entered it will be locked, and no-one else will enter through it."**[15]

- Ramadan is a pillar of Islam, the Qur`aan was revealed in this month, and in it there is a night that is better than a thousand months.

- **"When Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains."**[16]

- Fasting Ramadan is equivalent to fasting ten months.[17]

- **"Whoever fasts Ramadan out of faith and with the hope of (Allah's) reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven."** [18]

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11 Muslim, 2/807.

12 Reported by Ahmad, 2/402; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/411; Saheeh al-Jaami', 3880.

13 Reported by Muslim, 2/808.

14 Reported by Ahmad, 5/391; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/412.

15 Al-Bukhaari, Fatḫ no. 1797.

16 Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 3277.

17 See Musnad Ahmad, 5/280; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/421.

- With the breaking of every fast, Allaah will choose people to free from Hellfire.[19]

The Benefits of Fasting

(4) There is much wisdom and numerous benefits in fasting which relate to the taqwaa Allah mentioned in the aayah (verse):



"…that you may become al-muttaqoon (the pious)." [Surah al-Baqarah 2:183]

The interpretation of this aayah is that if a person refrains from halaal things hoping to gain the pleasure of Allaah and out of fear of His punishment, it will be easier for him to refrain from doing haraam things.

When a person's stomach is empty and he is hungry, many of his other faculties are kept from feeling hunger or desires; but when his stomach is satisfied, his tongue, eyes, hands and private parts start to feel hunger. Fasting leads to the defeat of Shaytaan; it controls desires and protects one's faculties.

When the fasting person feels the pangs of hunger, he experiences how the poor feel, thus he feels compassion towards them and gives them something to ward off their hunger. Hearing

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[18] Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fatḩ no. 37.

[19] Reported by Ahmad, 5/256; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/419.

about them is not the same as sharing their suffering, just as a rider does not understand the hardship of walking until he gets down and walks.

Fasting trains the person to avoid desires and to keep away from sin; it helps a person to overcome his own nature and to wean himself away from bad habits. It also trains a person to get used to being organized and punctual, which will solve the problem that many people have of being disorganized, if only they realized.

Fasting is also a demonstration of the unity of the Muslims, as the Ummah (Islamic nation) fasts and breaks its fast all at the same time.

Fasting also provides a great opportunity for those who are calling others to Allaah. In this month many people come to the mosque for the first time, and also those who have not been to the mosque for a long time, and their hearts are open, so we must make the most of this opportunity by preaching in a gentle manner, teaching appropriate lessons and speaking beneficial words, whilst also cooperating in righteousness and good deeds. The teacher should not be so preoccupied with others though that he forgets his own soul and becomes like a candle that lights the way for others while it is itself consumed.

The Etiquettes and Sunan of Fasting

Some aspects of fasting are obligatory (fard) and others are recommended (mustahab).

We should make sure that we eat and drink something at suhoor (the time before dawn), and that we delay it until just before the adhaan of Fajr. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Have suhoor, for in suhoor there is blessing (barakah)."**[20]

> **"Suhoor is blessed food, and it involves being different from the people of the Book. What a good suhoor for the believer is dates."**[21]

One should not delay iftaar (breakfast after dusk), because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"The people remain upin goodness so long as they do not delay iftaar."** [22]

A person should break his fast in the manner described in the hadeeth narrated by Anas (رضي الله عنه):

> **"The Prophet (ﷺ) used to break his fast with fresh dates before praying; if fresh dates were not available, he would eat (dried) dates; if dried dates were not available, he would have a few sips of water."**[23]

After iftaar, it is Sunnah to recite the words reported in the hadeeth narrated by Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them both), according to which the Prophet (ﷺ), when he broke his fast, would say:

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[20] Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fat'h, 4/139.

[21] Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 2345; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/448.

[22] Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fat'h, 4/198.

[23] Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3/79 and others. He said it is a ghareeb hasan hadeeth. Classed as saheeh in al-Irwaa´, no. 922.

"Dhahaba adh-dhama´, wabtallat il-'urooq, wa thabat al-ajru in shaa Allaah (The thirst has gone, the veins are flowing again, and the reward is confirmed, in shaa Al-laah)."[24]

Keeping away from sin, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"When any of you is fasting, let him not commit any sin…" [25]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Whoever does not stop speaking falsehood and acting in accordance with it, Allaah has no need of him giving up his food and drink." (Al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 1903)

The fasting person should avoid all kinds of haraam actions, such as backbiting, obscenity and lying, otherwise his reward may all be lost. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"It may be that a fasting person gets nothing from his fast except hunger."[26]

Among the things that can destroy one's hasanaat (good deeds) and cause sayi`aat (bad deeds) to be recorded is allowing oneself to be distracted by quiz-shows, soap operas, movies and sports matches, idle gatherings, hanging about in the streets with evil people and time-wasters, driving around for no purpose, and crowding the streets and sidewalks. The month of tahajjud, dhikr and worship for many people becomes a month in which they

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[24] Reported by Abu Dawood, 2/765; its isnaad was classed as hasan by al-Daaraqutni, 2/185.

[25] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 1904.

[26] Reported by Ibn Maajah, 1/539; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/453.

sleep during the day – so as to avoid feeling hunger – and spend their nights in entertainment and indulging in their desires. This further causes them to miss their prayers and the opportunity to pray them in congregation. Some people even greet this month with feelings of annoyance, thinking only of the pleasures they will miss out on. In Ramadan, some people even travel to the lands of the disbelievers to enjoy a holiday! Even the mosques are not free from such evils, as women also attend wearing makeup and perfume. Even the Sacred House of Allaah (Ka'bah) is not free of these ills. Some people make this month a season for begging, even though they are not in need. Some entertain themselves with dangerous fireworks and the like, and some of them waste their time in the markets, wandering around the shops, or having new clothes stitched and following fashions. Some shop owners introduce new products and new styles in their stores during the last ten days of the month, thus keeping people away from earning rewards and hasanaat.

A person should not allow himself to be provoked, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"If someone fights him or insults him, he should say, 'I am fasting, I am fasting.' "**[27]

One reason for this is to remind himself, and the other reason is to remind the one who is provoking him. But anyone who looks at the conduct of many of those who fast will see something quite different. It is essential to exercise self-control and be calm, but we see the opposite among the crazy drivers who speed up when they hear the adhaan for Maghrib.

A person should not overeat, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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[27] Reported by al-Bukhaari and others. Al-Fat'h, no. 1894.

“The son of Adam fills no vessel worse than his stomach.”[28]

The wise person eats to live, not lives to eat. The best type of food is that which is there to be used, not that which is there to be served. People indulge in making all kinds of food (during Ramadan) and treating food preparation as a virtual art form, and thus housewives and servants spend all their time on making food. This keeps them away from worship, and people spend far more on food during Ramadan than they ordinarily do. Thus the month becomes the month of indigestion, obesity and gastric illness in which people eat like gluttons and drink like thirsty camels. When they stand to pray Taraaweeh (the night prayer in Ramadan) they do so reluctantly, and some of them leave after the first two rak‘ahs.

A person should increase in his generosity by sharing knowledge, giving charity, using one’s position of authority or physical strength to help others, and having a good attitude. Al-Bukhaari and Muslim reported that Ibn ‘Abbaas (ﷺ) said:

“The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) was the most generous of people [in doing good], and he was most generous of all in Ramadan when Jibreel met with him; he used to meet him every night in Ramadan and teach him the Qur`aan. The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) was more generous in doing good than a blowing wind.”[29]

How can people prefer stinginess to generosity and laziness to action to the extent that they do not do their work nor treat one another properly, and they use fasting as an excuse for all this?!

[28] Reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 2380; he said, this is a hasan saheeh hadeeth.

[29] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat’h, no. 6.

Combining fasting with feeding the poor is one of the means of attaining Paradise, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"In Paradise there are rooms whose outside can be seen from the inside and the inside can be seen from the outside. Allaah has prepared them for those who feed the poor, those who are gentle in speech, those who fast regularly, and those who pray at night when people are asleep."**[30]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Whoever gives food to a fasting person with which to break his fast, he will have the reward equal to his (the fasting person), without it detracting in the slightest from the reward of the fasting person."**[31]

Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah] (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, "What is meant is that he should feed him until he is satisfied." [32]

A number of the Salaf[33] (may Allaah have mercy on them) preferred the poor over themselves when breaking their fast at the time of iftaar. Among these were 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar, Maalik ibn Deenaar, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others. 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar would not break his fast unless there were orphans and poor people with him.

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[30] Reported by Ahmad 5/343; Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 2137. Al-Albaani said in his footnote, its isnaad is hasan because of other corroborating reports.

[31] Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3/171; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/451.

[32] Al-Ikhtiyaaraat al-Fiqhiyyah, p. 109.

[33] **Salaf:** Our pious predecessors, particularly those of the first three generations. (Editor)

What should be done in this Great Month

Prepare yourselves and your environment for worship [by doing the following]:

- Hasten to repent and turn back to Allaah.

- Rejoice at the onset of this month.

- Fast properly.

- Have the correct frame of mind and fear Allaah when praying Taraaweeh.

- Do not become tired during the middle[34] ten days of the month.

- Seek Laylat al-Qadr.

- Read the entire Qur`aan repetitively, try to weep, and try to understand what you are reading.

- 'Umrah during Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj [performed tith the Prophet (ﷺ)].

- Charity given during this virtuous time is multiplied.

- I'tikaaf (retreat in the mosque for worship) is a confirmed Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).

- There is nothing wrong with congratulating one another at the beginning of the month. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to tell his Com-

[34] Usually people start off the month with great enthusiasm, and also spend the last ten days in worship due to its great merits. As a result, people may feel apathetic during the middle of the month. (Editor)

panions the good news of the onset of Ramadan and urge them to make the most of it. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said:

> **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said, 'There has come to you Ramadan, a blessed month. Allaah has made it obligatory on you to fast (this month). During it, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are locked, and the devils are chained up. In it there is a night that is better than a thousand months, and whoever is deprived of its goodness has indeed been deprived.' "**[35]

Some Rulings concerning Fasting

(6) One kind of fasting is that which must be done on consecutive days, such as the fast of Ramadan, fasting in expiation for killing someone by mistake, divorcing one's wife by dhihaar[36], or having intercourse during the day in Ramadan. Also, one who makes a vow to fast consecutive days must fulfill it.

Another kind of fasting is that which does not have to be done on consecutive days, such as making up days missed in Ramadan, fasting ten days if one does not have a sacrifice [in Hajj], fasting for breaking an sworn oath (according to the majority), fasting to compensate for violating the conditions of ihraam (according to the most correct opinion), and fasting in fulfillment of a vow in

[35] Reported by al-Nasaa`i, 4/129; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/490.

[36] A jaahili form of divorce in which a man says to his wife, "You are to me as the back of my mother" – Translator.

cases where one did not have the intention of fasting consecutive days.

(7) Voluntary fasts make up for shortcomings in the obligatory fasts. Examples of voluntary fasts include 'Aashooraa´, the Day of 'Arafah (for those not performing Hajj), Ayyaam al-Beed[37], Mondays and Thursdays, six days of Shawwaal, and the specifics fasts of Muharram and Sha'baan.

(8) It is not permitted to single out Friday for fasting[38] or to fast on a Saturday unless it is an obligatory fast[39]. What is intended here is singling it out without there being a valid reason. It is not permitted to fast for an entire lifetime, or to fast for two days or more without a break(i.e., to fast two or three days [straight] without breaking one's fast each day after Maghrib).

It is haraam to fast on the two Eid days or on the Ayyaam al-Tashreeq - the 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhu'l-Hijjah, - for these are days of eating, drinking and remembering Allaah. It is permissible though for pilgrims performing Hajj to fast them (Ayyaam al-Tashreeq) in Minaa if they do not have a sacrifice to offer.

How is the Onset of Ramadan Determined?

(9) The onset of Ramadan is confirmed by the sighting of the new moon or by the completion of thirty days of Sha'baan. Who-

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37 The 13th, 14th and 15th days of each Hijri month – Translator.

38 Al-Bukhaari, Fat'h al-Baari, no. 1985.

39 Reported and classed as hasan by al-Tirmidhi, 3/111.

ever sees the crescent of the new moon or hears about it from a trustworthy source is obliged to fast.

Using calculations to determine the onset of Ramadan is a bid‘ah (innovation), because the hadeeth of the Prophet (ﷺ) clearly states:

> **“Fast when you see it (the new moon) and break your fast when you see it.”** [40]

If an adult, sane, trustworthy, reliable Muslim who has good eyesight says that he has seen the crescent with his own eyes, then we should take his word for it and act accordingly (i.e., start fasting).

Who is Obligated to Fast?

(10) Fasting is an obligation on every adult, sane, resident [i.e., not traveling] Muslim who is able to fast and has nothing to prevent him or her from doing so, such as menstruation or postpartum bleeding.

A person is deemed to have reached adulthood when any one of the following three things occur:

1) emission of semen, whether in a wet dream or otherwise;

2) growth of coarse pubic hair around the private parts;

3) attainment of fifteen years of age.

[40] Muslim. (Editor)

In the case of females, there is a fourth, namely menstruation. When a girl reaches menarche (starts her periods), she is obliged to fast even if she has not yet reached the age of ten.

(11) Children should be instructed to fast at the age of seven if they are able to, and some scholars said that as in the case of Salaah, a child may be physically disciplined at the age of ten if he does not fast.[41] Children will be rewarded for fasting, and their parents will be rewarded for bringing them up properly and guiding them to do righteous deeds. Al-Rubayyi' bint Mu'awwidh (رضي الله عنها) said, speaking about Ramadan when it was made obligatory:

> **"We used to make our children fast, and we would make them a toy made out of wool. If any one of them started to cry for food, we would give them that toy to play with until it was time to break the fast."**[42]

Some people do not think that it is important to instruct their children to fast. Indeed a child may be enthusiastic about fasting and may be capable of doing it, but his father or mother may tell him not to fast out of so-called "pity" for him. They do not realize that true pity and compassion consist of helping him to become accustomed to fasting. Allaah says:

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41 See al-Mughni, 3/90.

42 Al-Bukhaari, Fat'h, no. 1960.

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ قُوٓاْ أَنفُسَكُمۡ وَأَهۡلِيكُمۡ نَارٗا وَقُودُهَا ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱلۡحِجَارَةُ عَلَيۡهَا مَلَٰٓئِكَةٌ غِلَاظٞ شِدَادٞ لَّا يَعۡصُونَ ٱللَّهَ مَآ أَمَرَهُمۡ وَيَفۡعَلُونَ مَا يُؤۡمَرُونَ ٦ ﴾

"O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allaah, but do that which they are commanded." [Surah al-Tahreem 66:6]

Extra attention must be given to the matter of girls when they have just reached the age of maturity, for they may fast during their menses out of shyness without making up their fasts later.

(12) If a kaafir (non-Muslim) becomes Muslim, if a child reaches puberty, or if an insane person comes to his senses during the day, they should refrain from eating until dusk, for they are now among those who are obligated to fast. They do not though, have to make up for the days of Ramadan that they have missed, for at that specific time they were not among those upon whom fasting was obligatory.

(13) The insane are not held responsible for their actions (their deeds are not recorded), but if a person is insane at times and sane at others, he must fast during his periods of sanity and is excused during his periods of insanity. If he becomes insane during the day, this does not invalidate his fast, just as is the case if someone becomes unconscious because of illness or some other

reason, for he had the intention of fasting when he was sane.[43] A similar case is the ruling governing epileptics.

(14) If someone dies during Ramadan, there is no "debt" on him or his heirs with regard to the remaining days of the month.

(15) If someone does not know that it is obligatory to fast Ramadan or that it is haraam to eat or have sexual intercourse during the day in this month, then according to the majority of scholars, this excuse is acceptable. This may be the case for a new convert to Islam, a Muslim living in Daar al-Harb (non-Muslim lands) and a Muslim who grew up among the kuffaar. As for those who were raised amongst Muslims and were able to ask questions and find out, they have no excuse.

Travelers

(16) For a traveler to be allowed to break his fast, certain conditions must be met. His journey should be lengthy, or else be known as traveling (although there is a well-known difference of opinion among the scholars on this matter), and he should have left the city and its suburbs. The majority of scholars say that the traveler should not break his fast before he passes the city limits. They say that a journey has not really begun until a person passes the city limits, and a person who is still in the city is "settled" and "present". Allaah says:

[43] "Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan" by Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p.28.



"... So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan, i.e., is present at his home), he must observe sawm (fasts) that month..." [Surah al-Baqarah 2:185]

He is not considered a traveler until he has left the city. If he is still within the city, he is regarded as a resident and is not permitted to shorten his prayers. His journey should also not have been one undertaken for some sinful purposes (according to the majority of scholars), or for the purpose of evading the fast.

(17) A traveler is allowed to break his fast according to the consensus of the Ummaḥ and no regards is taken as to his level of ability or difficulty in doing so. Even if his journey is easy and he has someone to serve him, he is still permitted to break his fast and shorten his prayers.[44]

(18) Whoever is determined to travel in Ramadan should not have the intention of breaking his fast until he is actually traveling because something may happen to prevent him from se tting out on his journey.[45]

A traveler should not break his fast until he has passed beyond the inhabited houses of his town; once he has passed the city limits, he may break his fast. Similarly if he is flying, once the plane has taken off and has gone beyond the city limits, he may break his fast. If the airport is outside his city, he can break his fast there, but if the airport is within his city or attached to it, he

[44] Majmoo' al-Fataawaaa, 25/210.

[45] Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 2/278.

should not break his fast in the airport because he is still within the bounds of his own city.

(19) If the sun sets and he breaks his fast on the ground, and then the plane takes off and he sees the sun, he does not have to stop eating. He has already completed his day's fasting, and there is no way to repeat an act of worship once it has already been completed. If the plane takes off before sunset and he wants to complete that day's fast during the journey, he should not break his fast until the sun has set from wherever he is in the air. The pilot is not permitted to bring the plane down to an altitude from which the sun cannot be seen just for the purposes of breaking the fast, for this would just be a kind of trickery. If the pilot were to bring the plane down lower for a genuine reason though, and the disk of the sun disappears as a result, he may break his fast.[46]

(20) Whoever travels to a destination and intends to stay there for more than four days must fast according to the majority of scholars. Thus, if a person travels to study abroad for several months or years, then according to the majority of scholars – including the four imaams – he is regarded as one who is "settled" there and so he has to fast and pray his prayers in full.

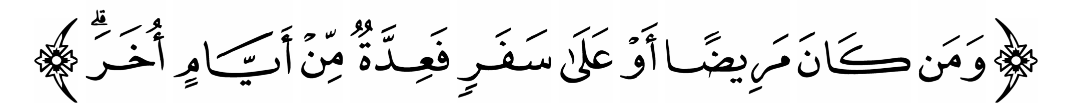
If a traveler passes through a city other than his own, he does not have to fast unless his stay there is longer than four days. If it is so, he must fast, because the rulings that apply to those who are settled apply also to him.[47]

(21) Whoever begins fasting while he is "settled", then embarks on a journey during the day is allowed to break his fast, because

[46] From the Fataawaaa of Shaykh Ibn Baaz, issued verbally.

[47] See Fataawaa al-Da'wah by Ibn Baaz, 977.

Allaah has made travel in general a legitimate excuse not to fast. Allaah says:



"… and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days on which one did not observe sawm must be made up] from other days…" [Surah al-Baqarah 2:185]

(22) A person who habitually travels is permitted not to fast if he has a home to which he returns, such as a courier who travels to serve the interests of the Muslims (and also taxi drivers, pilots and airline employees, even if their travel is daily), but they have to make up the fasts later. The same applies to sailors who have a home on land. But if the sailor has his wife and all he needs with him on the ship and is constantly traveling, then he is not allowed to break his fast or shorten his prayers. If nomadic bedouins are traveling from their winter home to their summer home or vice versa, they are allowed to break their fast and shorten their prayers. Once they have settled in either their summer home or their winter home though, they should not break their fast or shorten their prayers, even if they are following their flocks.[48]

(23) If a traveler arrives during the day, there is a well-known difference among the scholars as to whether he should stop eating and drinking.[49] To be on the safe side though, he should stop eating and drinking out of respect for the month, but he must make

[48] See Majmoo' Fataawaa Ibn Taymiyah, 25/213.

[49] Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/212.

the day up later whether or not he stops eating and drinking after his arrival.

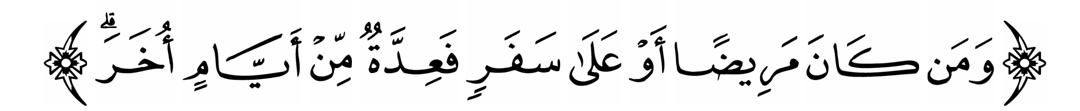
(24) If he starts Ramadan in one city and then travels to another city where the people started fasting before him or after him, he should follow the ruling governing the people to whom he has traveled. He should only end Ramadan when they end Ramadan, even if it means that he is fasting for more than thirty days, because the Prophet ﷺ) said:

> **"Fast when everyone is fasting, and break your fast when everyone is breaking their fast."**[50]

If this means that his fast is less than twenty-nine days, he must make it up after Eid, because the hijri month cannot be less than twenty-nine days.[51]

The Sick

(25) In the event of any sickness that makes people feel unwell, a person is allowed not to fast. The basis for this is the aayah:



> **"… and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days on which one did not observe sawm must be made up] from other days…"** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:185]

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[50] Muslim. (Editor)

[51] From "Fataawaa al-Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz: Fataawaa al-Siyaam", Daar al-Watan, pp. 15-16.

But if the ailment is minor, such as a cough or headache, then it is not a valid reason to break one's fast.

If there is medical proof, if a person knows from his usual experience, or he is certain that fasting will make his illness worse or will delay his recovery, he is permitted to break his fast. Rather, it is disliked (makrooh) for him to fast in such cases. If a person is seriously ill, he is not obligated to have the intention during the night to fast the following day, even if there is a possibility that he may be well in the morning, because what counts is the present moment.[52]

(26) If fasting will cause unconsciousness, he should break his fast and make up for it later.[53] If a person falls unconscious during the day and recovers before Maghrib or after it, his fast is still valid as long as he was fasting in the morning. If he is unconscious from Fajr until Maghrib, then according to the majority of scholars his fast is not valid. According to the majority of scholars, it is obligatory for a person who falls unconscious[54] to make up his fasts later on, no matter how long he was unconscious.[55] Some scholars have issued fataawaa (verdicts) to the effect that a person who falls unconscious, takes sleeping pills, or receives a

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52 If a person does not make the intention to fast the following day due to illness, but then awakens after the break of dawn and sees that he has recovered, he must refrain from eating and drinking until dusk, but he must make up for that fast later, for he did not have the intention to fast before the day started. (Editor- taken from an oral verdict given by Sheikh Abdul-Qadir al-'Aroosi)

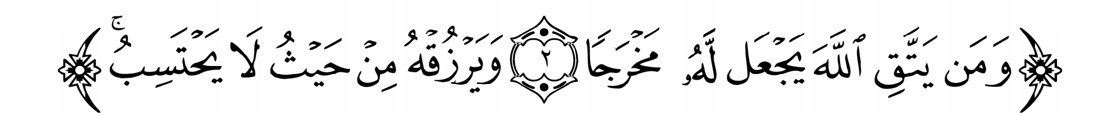
53 Al-Fataawaa, 25/217.

54 It seems as if the author intends here to mean those who have fallen unconsciuos before dawn until after dusk, no matter how many days or years that maybe. (Editor)

55 Al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/412, 3/32; al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah, 5/268.

general anesthetic for a genuine reason and becomes unconscious for three days or less must make up the fasts later on, for he is regarded as being like one who sleeps. If he is unconscious for more than three days, he does not have to make up the fasts because he is regarded as being like one who is insane.[56]

(27) If a person feels extreme hunger or thirst, and fears that he may die or that some of his faculties may be irreparably damaged, and he has credible grounds for believing this to be so, he may break his fast and make up for it later on, as saving one's life is obligatory. It is not permissible though, to break one's fast because of bearable hardship or because one feels tired or is afraid of some imagined illness. People who work in physically demanding jobs are not permitted to break their fast, and they must have the intention at night of fasting the following day. If they cannot stop working and they are afraid that some harm may befall them during the day, or they face some extreme hardship that causes them to break their fast, then they should eat only what is enough to help them bear the hardship, then they should refrain from eating until sunset, but they must make the fast up later. Workers in physically demanding jobs, such as working with furnaces and smelting metals, should try to change their hours so that they work at night or take their holidays during Ramadan. They should do so even if their leave were unpaid, but if this is not possible, they should look for another job where they can combine their religious and worldly duties.



56 From the Fataawaa of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, issued verbally.

"And whoever fears Allaah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he could never imagine." [Surah al-Talaaq 65:2-3][57]

Students' exams are no excuse for breaking one's fast during Ramadan, and it is not permissible to obey one's parents in breaking the fast because of having exams. There is no obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience to the Creator.[58]

(28) A sick person who hopes to recover should wait until he gets better, and then make up for the fasts he has missed. He is not allowed just to feed the poor. The person who is suffering from a chronic illness and has no hope of recovery and elderly people who are unable to fast should feed a poor person with half a *saa'* of the staple food of his country for every day that he has missed. (Half a *saa'* is roughly equivalent to one and a half kilograms of rice). It is permissible for him to do this all at once on one day at the end of the month, or he may feed one poor person every day. He must do this by giving actual food due to the wording of the aayah – he cannot do it by giving money to the poor.[59] He may however, give money to a trustworthy person or charitable organization to buy food and distribute it to the poor on his behalf.

If a sick person does not fast in Ramadan while waiting to recover in order that he can make the days up later, and then finds out that his sickness is chronic, he must feed a poor person for every day that he did not fast.[60] If a person is waiting to recover

[57] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/233, 235.

[58] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/241.

[59] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/198.

[60] From the Fataawaa of Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen.

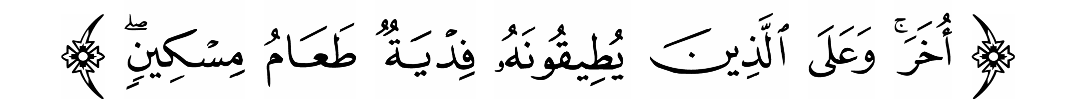
from his illness and hopes to get better but then dies, there is no "debt" owed by him or his heirs. If a person's sickness is considered to be chronic and he does not fast but feeds the poor instead, then medical advances result in the discovery of a remedy which he is administered and then recovers, he does not have to make up the fasts he has missed, because he did what he had to do at that time.[61]

(29) If a sick person recovers and is able to make up the missed fasts but does not do so before he dies, money should be taken from his estate to feed a poor person for every day that he missed. If any of his relatives want to fast on his behalf, then this is fine, for it was reported in Bukhari and Muslim that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said:

> **"Whoever dies owing some fasts, let his heir fast on his behalf."**[62]

The Elderly

(30) The very elderly who have lost their strength and are getting weaker every day as death approaches do not have to fast, and they are allowed not to fast so long as fasting is difficult for them. Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) said concerning the aayah:



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[61] Fataawaa al-Ljnah al -Daa`imah, 10/195.

[62] From Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, volume on Da'wah, 806.

"And as for those who can fast with difficulty (e.g., an old man, etc.), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a poor person (for every day)." [Surah al-Baqarah 2:184]

"This has not been abrogated. It refers to the old man and the old woman who cannot fast, so they should feed a poor person for every day."[63]

Those who have become senile and confused do not have to fast or do anything else, and their family does not have to do anything on their behalf either. Such people are no longer counted as responsible. If they are of sound mind sometimes and confused at other times, they have to fast when they are sound and they do not have to fast when they are confused.[64]

(31) As for those who are fighting an enemy or are being besieged by them, they are allowed to break their fast if it might make them too weak to fight, even if they are not traveling. If they need to break their fast before fighting, they may do so. The Prophet (ﷺ) once said to his Companions before fighting:

"In the morning you are going to meet your enemy and not fasting will make you stronger, so do not fast." [65]

This is also the preferred opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah. The scholars of Damascus also issued fatwas to the same effect when their city was attacked by the Tatars.

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63 Al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-Tafseer, Baab Ayyaaman Ma'doodaat.

64 See Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan by Ibn 'Uthyameen, p. 28.

65 Reported by Muslim, 1120, 'Abd al-Baaqi edition.

(32) If a person's reason for not fasting is obvious, such as illness, there is nothing wrong with him eating or drinking openly. But if the reason is hidden, such as menstruation, it is better to eat and drink in secret so as not to attract accusations and the like.

Niyyah (Intention) in Fasting

(33) Niyyah (intention) is a required condition of the obligatory fast [of Ramadan] as well as other obligatory fasts, such as making up missed fasts or fasts done as an act of kaffaarah (expiation), because the Prophet ﷺ) said:

> **"There is no fast for the person who did not intend to fast from the night before."**[66]

The intention may be made at any point during the night, even if it is just a moment before Fajr. Niyyah means the resolution in the heart to do something; speaking it aloud is bid'ah (a reprehensible innovation), and anyone who knows that tomorrow is one of the days of Ramadan and wants to fast has [due to that knowledge, already] made the intention. (Majmoo' Fataawaa Shaykh al-Islam, 25/215) If a person intends to break his fast during the day but does not do so, then according to the most correct opinion, his fast is not adversely affected; he is like a person who wants to speak during the prayer but does not speak. Some of the scholars think that he is not fasting as soon as he stops intending to fast, so as a precaution, he should make up that fast later. Apostasy,

[66] Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 2454. A number of the scholars, such as al-Bukhaari, al-Nasaa`i, al-Tirmidhi and others thought it was likely to be mawqoof. See Talkhees al-Habeer, 2/188.

however, invalidates the intention; there is no dispute on this matter.

The person who is fasting Ramadan does not need to repeat the intention every night during Ramadan; it is sufficient to have the intention at the beginning of the month. If the intention is interrupted by breaking the fast due to travel or sickness, for example, he has to renew the intention to fast when the reason for breaking the fast is no longer present.

(34) Making the intention the night before is not a condition of general nafil (supererogatory or voluntary) fasts, because of the hadeeth narrated by 'Aa`ishah (ﷺ), who said:

> **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) entered upon me one day and said, 'Do you have anything (food)?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'In that case I am fasting.' "**[67]

But in the case of specific supererogatory fasts such as 'Arafah and 'Aashooraa´, it is better to be on the safe side and make the intention the night before.

(35) If a person embarks on an obligatory fast, such as making up for a day missed in Ramadan, fulfilling a vow, or fasting as an act of kaffaarah (expiation), he must complete the fast and is not permitted to break it unless he has a valid excuse for doing so. In the case of a nafil fast:

> **"The person who is observing a voluntary fast is his own ameer (leader), if he wishes he may [continue his] fast, and if he wishes he may break it."**[68]

[67] Reported by Muslim, 2/809, 'Abd al-Baaqi.

[68] Reported by Ahmad, 6/342.

…even if there is no reason to break it. The Prophet (ﷺ) awoke one morning and fasted, and then he ate.[69] But will the person who breaks his fast for no reason be rewarded for the fasting that he has already done? Some of the scholars say that he will not be rewarded[70], so it is better for the person who is observing a voluntary fast to complete it unless there is a valid, pressing reason for him to stop fasting.

(36) If a person does not know that Ramadan has started until after dawn, he must stop eating and drinking for the rest of the day and make that day up later on according to the majority of scholars, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"There is no fasting for the one who does not have the intention to fast from the night before."**[71]

(37) If a prisoner or captive knows that Ramadan has begun by sighting the moon himself or by being told by a trustworthy person, he must fast. If he does not know when the month is beginning, he must try to deduce it himself (ijtihaad) and act according to what he thinks is most likely. If at a later point he finds out that his fasting coincided with Ramadan, this is fine according to the majority of scholars, and if his fasting came after Ramadan, this is fine according to the majority of fuqahaa´. But if his fasting came before Ramadan, this is not acceptable and he must make up the fast. If part of his fasting coincided with Ramadan and part of it did not, what coincided with it or came after it is fine,

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[69] As reported in Saheeh Muslim, in the story of the al-hais (a type of food) that was given to him as a gift when he was in 'Aa`ishah's house; no. 1154, 'Abd al-Baaqi.

[70] Al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 28/13.

[71] Reported by Abu Dawood, 2454.

but what came before is not. If the matter never becomes clear to him, then his fasting is acceptable because he did the best he could, and Allaah burdens not a person beyond his ability.[72]

When to Start and Stop Fasting

(38) Once the entire disk of the sun has disappeared [below the horizon], the fasting person should break his fast and not pay any attention to the red glow that remains on the horizon. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Once night comes from there and the day disappears from there, and the sun has set, the fasting person should break his fast."**[73]

The Sunnah is to hasten in breaking the fast. The Prophet (ﷺ) would not pray Maghrib until he had broken his fast, if only with a sip of water.[74] If a fasting person cannot find anything with which to break his fast, he should have the intention in his heart to break his fast and should not suck his finger [or the like], as some of the common folk do. He should beware of breaking the fast before the correct time. Once the Prophet (ﷺ) saw some people hanging from their hamstrings with blood pouring from the corners of their mouths. When he asked about them, he was told that they were people who broke their fast before it was time

[72] Al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 28/84.

[73] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 1954; the issue is also mentioned in Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/216.

[74] Reported by al-Haakim, 1/432; al-Silsilat al-Saheehah, 2110.

to do so.[75] If a person is certain, thinks it most likely, or is in equal doubt whether or not he broke the fast before the proper time, he should make up the fast later on, for the basic principle is that the day has not ended.[76] He should beware of relying on the word of small children or untrustworthy sources, and he should also beware of the time differences between different cities and villages when he hears the adhaan on the radio and so on.

(39) When dawn appears, which is the white light which spreads across the horizon in the East [well before the actual sunrise], the fasting person must stop eating and drinking straightaway whether he hears the adhaan or not. If he knows that the mu`edhin calls the adhaan at dawn, he has to stop eating and drinking as soon as he hears his adhaan, but if the mu`edhin calls the adhaan before Fajr, he does not have to stop eating and drinking when he hears it. If he does not know the mu`edhin's usual practice, or there are differences among the mu`edhins and he is unable to determine the time of dawn for himself – as is usually the case in cities due to lighting and buildings – he should take the precaution of referring to a printed timetable, so long as he is sure that the calculations on which it is based are not incorrect.[77]

The idea of taking precautionary measures by stopping eating and drinking a certain time before Fajr, such as ten minutes before, is bid'ah. On some timetables you can see one heading for "imsaak"

[75] The hadeeth is in Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 1986, and in Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/420.

[76] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/287.

[77] He should also make sure that the watch he is using is set to the right time, for this might lead the person to break his fast before its proper time. (Editor)

(stopping eating and drinking) and another for Fajr. This is something that is contrary to Islam.

(40) The Muslims living in cities where there is a distinct alternation of night and day in every twenty-four hour period are obliged to fast, no matter how long the day is, so long as there is a distinction between night and day. In those places where there is no such distinction, Muslims should fast according to the times in the nearest city in which there is a distinct alternation of night and day.

Things that Break the Fast

(41) Apart from menstruation and postnatal bleeding, other things which break the fast are only considered to do so if the following three conditions apply:

1) If a person knows that it breaks the fast and is not ignorant;

2) If he is aware of what he is doing and has not forgotten that he is fasting;

3) If he does it of his own free will and is not forced to do it.

Among the things that break the fast are actions that involve the expulsion of bodily fluids, such as intercourse, vomiting, menstruation and cupping; and actions that involve ingesting matter, such as eating and drinking.[78]

[78] Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/148.

(42) Among the things that break the fast are things that are classified as being like eating or drinking, such as taking medicines and pills by mouth, injections of nourishing substances, or blood transfusions.

- Injections that are not given to replace food and drink but are used to administer medications such as penicillin and insulin, tonics, or vaccinations do not break the fast regardless of whether they are intramuscular or intravenous.[79] But as a precaution, all these injections should be given during the night.

- Kidney dialysis, whereby the blood is taken out, cleaned, and put back with some chemicals or nourishing substances such as sugars and salts added, is considered to break the fast.[80]

- According to the most correct view, suppositories, eye-drops, ear-drops, having a tooth extracted and treating wounds do not break the fast.[81]

- Puffers used for asthma do not break the fast, because this is just compressed gas that goes to the lungs – it is not food, and it is needed at all times, in Ramadan and others.

- Having a blood sample taken does not break the fast and is permissible because it is something that is needed.[82]

- Medicines used by gargling do not break the fast so long as they are not swallowed. If a person has a tooth filled and feels the taste of it in his throat, this does not break his fast.[83]

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[79] Fataawaa Ibn Ibraaheem, 4/189.

[80] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/190.

[81] Majmoo' Fataawaa Shaykh al-Islam, 25/233, 25/245.

[82] Fataawaa al-Da'wah: Ibn Baaz, no. 979.

The following things do NOT break the fast:

- Having the ears syringed, nose drops and nasal sprays – so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

- Tablets that are placed under the tongue to treat angina and other conditions - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

- Anything inserted into the vagina, such as pessaries, douches, scopes or fingers for the purpose of a medical examination.

- Insertion of a scope or intra-uterine device (IUD or "coil") and the like into the uterus.

- Insertion into the urethra – for males or females – of a catheter, opaque dye for diagnostic imaging, medication or solutions for cleansing the bladder.

- Dental fillings, tooth extractions, cleaning of the teeth, use of siwaak or toothbrush - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

- Rinsing, gargling or applying topical mouth sprays - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

- Subcutaneous, intramuscular or intravenous injections – except for those used to provide nourishment.

- Oxygen.

- Anesthetic gases – so long as the patient is not given nourishing solutions.

- Medications absorbed through the skin, such as creams and patches used to administer medicine and chemicals.

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[83] From the Fataawaa of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, issued verbally.

- Insertion of a catheter into veins for diagnostic imaging or treatment of blood vessels in the heart or other organs.

- Use of a laparoscope (instrument inserted through a small incision in the abdomen) to examine the abdominal cavity or to perform operations.

- Taking biopsies or samples from the liver or other organs – so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions.

- Gastroscopy – so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions or other substances.

- Introduction of any instrument or medication to the brain or spinal column.

(43) Anyone who eats and drinks deliberately during the day in Ramadan with no valid excuse has committed a kabeerah (grave major sin) and has to repent and make up for that fast later on. If he broke the fast with something haraam, such as drinking alcohol, this makes his sin even worse. Whatever the case, he has to repent sincerely and do more voluntary deeds, fasting and other acts of worship so as to avoid having any shortfall in his record of obligatory deeds, and so that Allaah might accept his repentance.

(44) **"If he forgets, and eats and drinks, then let him complete his fast, for Allaah has fed him and given him to drink."** [84]

According to another report,

[84] Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fat'h, no. 1933.

"He does not have to make the fast up later or offer expiation (kaffaarah)."[85]

If a person sees someone else who is eating because he has forgotten that he is fasting, he should remind him, because of the general meaning of the aayah:



"Help one another in righteousness and piety." [Surah al-Maa`idah 5:2]

…and the hadeeth,

"If I forget, remind me."[86]

…and that is because of the principle that this is a munkar (evil action) that must be changed.[87]

(45) Those who need to break their fast in order to save someone whose life is in danger may do so, but they should make it up later. This applies in cases where someone is drowning, or when fires need to be put out.

(46) If a person is obliged to fast but deliberately has intercourse during the day in Ramadan of his own free will, and where the two "circumcised parts" (genitals) come together and the head of the penis penetrates either the front or back passage, his fast is broken whether or not he ejaculates, and he must repent. He

[85] Reported by ibn Khuzaimah, ibn Hibbaan, al-Haakim, and Daaraqutni, Fat'h. (Editor)

[86] Al-Bukhaari. (Editor)

[87] Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p.70.

should still fast for the rest of the day, but he must make up the fast later on and offer expiation (kaffaarah). In a hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah:

> **"Whilst we were sitting with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man came to him and said: 'O Messenger of Allaah, I am doomed!' He said, 'What is the matter with you?' He said, 'I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting.' The Messenger of Allaah said, 'Do you have a slave whom you could set free?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Can you fast for two consecutive months?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Do you have the wherewithal to feed sixty poor people?' He said, 'No'…"**[88]

The same ruling also applies in cases of zinaa (adultery or fornication), homosexuality and bestiality.[89]

If a person has intercourse during the day on more than one day in Ramadan, he must offer expiation for each day as well as repeating the fast for each day. Not knowing that kaffaarah (expiation) is obligatory is no excuse.[90]

(47) If a man wants to have intercourse with his wife but he breaks his fast by eating first, his sin is more serious, because he has violated the sanctity of the month on two counts, by eating and by having intercourse. It is even more certain in this case that

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[88] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, 4, no. 1936.

[89] Translator's Note: Having Intercourse from the back passage, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality are major sins in Islam and are [even more] magnified if done during the day of Ramadhan.

[90] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/321.

expiation is obligatory, and if he tries to get out of it, that only makes matters worse. He must repent sincerely.[91]

(48) Kissing, hugging, embracing, touching and repeatedly looking at one's wife or concubine, if a man is able to control himself, is permissible, because it is reported in Bukhari and Muslim from 'Aa`ishah (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to kiss and embrace his wives whilst he was fasting, but he was the most in control of his desire. With regard to the hadeeth qudsi,

"He keeps away from his wife for My (Allah's) sake."[92]

…this is referring to intercourse. But if a person get aroused quickly and is unable to control himself, then it is not permissible for him to kiss or embrace his wife, because that will lead to him breaking his fast, as he cannot be sure that he will be able to avoid ejaculating or having intercourse. Allaah says in a hadeeth qudsi:

"…and he leaves his desire for My (Allah's) sake."[93]

The Islamic guideline is that anything that leads to haraam is also haraam.

(49) If a person is engaged in the act of intercourse and dawn appears, he is obliged to withdraw. His fast will be valid even if he ejaculates after withdrawal, but if he continues having intercourse until after dawn, he has broken his fast and must repent, make the fast up later, and offer expiation.

[91] See Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/262.

[92] Al-Munḍhiri, "Al -Targheeb w'al-Tarheeb". Al-Albani declared it as Saheeh. (Editor)

[93] Al-Bukhaari. (Editor)

(50) If morning comes and a person is in a state of janaabah (impurity following sexual intercourse), this does not affect his fasting. He or she is permitted to delay doing ghusl - whether it is for janaabah, following menstruation, or post-natal bleeding - until dawn has appeared (though well before sunrise) but it is better to hasten to do ghusl so that one can pray.

(51) If a person who is fasting sleeps and experiences a wet dream, this does not break his fast according to scholarly consensus (ijmaa'). The person should complete his fast. Delaying doing ghusl (until after dawn has appeared but well before sunrise) does not break the fast, but he should hasten to do ghusl so that he can pray and so that the angels will draw close to him.

(52) If a person ejaculates during the day in Ramadan because of something that he could have refrained from, such as touching or repeatedly looking at a woman, he must repent to Allaah and fast for the rest of the day and must make up that fast later. If a person starts to masturbate but then stops and does not ejaculate, he must repent, but he does not have to make the fast up later on because he did not ejaculate. The person who is fasting must keep away from everything that may provoke his desire, and he must repel any bad thoughts that come to him. However, according to the most correct opinion, if he emits madhiy (pre-seminal fluid), this does not break his fast.

The emission of wadiy (prostatic fluid), a thick sticky substance that comes out after urination with no sense of physical pleasure, does not break the fast. The person does not have to do ghusl, but he does have to do istinjaa´ (clean his private parts with water) and wudoo´.[94]

[94] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/279.

(53) **"Whoever vomits unintentionally does not have to make up the fast later on, but whoever vomits on purpose does have to make up the fast."**[95]

A person who vomits deliberately by inserting his finger into his throat, applying pressure to his stomach, deliberately smelling a repulsive odor, or looking at something that could make him vomit is obliged to make up the fast later on. If he feels that he is about to vomit but then it subsides by itself, this does not break his fast because it is not something that he can control. If the vomit though, comes into his mouth and he swallows it back down, this does break the fast. If a person feels sick in his stomach, he does not have to suppress the urge to vomit, because this could cause him harm.[96]

If a person unintentionally swallows something that is stuck between his teeth, or if it is so small that he could not tell it was there or spit it out, this is counted as being part of his saliva and it does not break his fast. But if it is big enough to spit out, he should do so. If he spits it out, this is fine, but if he swallows it, this breaks his fast. If it can be diluted in the mouth, in whole or in part, and it has an added taste or sweetness, it is haraam for him to chew it. If any of this substance reaches the throat, this breaks the fast. If a person spits out water after rinsing his mouth, his fast is not affected by any moisture or wetness that is left behind, because he cannot help it.

If a person suffers from a nosebleed, his fast is still valid, because this is something that is beyond his control.[97]

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[95] Saheeh hadeeth narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 3/89.

[96] Majaalis Sharh Ramadaan, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 67.

[97] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/264.

If he has gum ulcers or his gums bleed after using the siwaak (tooth stick), it is not permissible for him to swallow the blood; he must spit it out. However, if some blood enters his throat by accident and he did not mean for that to happen, there is no need to worry. Similarly, if vomit rises in his throat and then goes back down to his stomach without him intending for this to happen, his fast is still valid.[98]

With regard to mucus originating from the head (nose and sinuses) and phlegm originating from the chest by coughing and clearing the throat, if it is swallowed before it reaches the mouth, this does not break a person's fast, because it is a problem which all people have; but if it is swallowed after it reaches the mouth, this does break the fast. However, if it is swallowed unintentionally, it does not break the fast.

Inhaling water vapor, as may happen to people working in desalination plants, does not break the fast.[99]

It is makrooh (disliked) to taste food unnecessarily because this carries the risk that the fast may be broken. Examples of cases where it is necessary to taste food include a mother chewing food for an infant when she has no other way to feed him, tasting food to make sure that it is fine, and tasting something when making a purchase. It was reported that Ibn 'Abbaas said:

> **"There is nothing wrong with tasting vinegar or anything that one wishes to buy."**[100]

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[98] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/254.

[99] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/276.

[100] Classed as hasan in Irwaa´ al-Ghaleel, 4/86. See al-Fat'h, commentary on Baab Ightisaal al-Saa`im, Kitaab al-Siyaam.

(54) Using siwaak is Sunnah for the one who is fasting at all times of the day, even if it is fresh and moist. If a person who is fasting uses a siwaak and detects some heat or other taste from it and swallows it, or if he takes the siwaak out of his mouth and sees saliva on it then puts it back in his mouth and swallows the saliva, this does not break his fast.[101] He should avoid what contains substances which can be diluted, such as the green siwaak or siwaak that has any extra flavor added to it, like lemon or mint. He should spit out any small pieces that come off the siwaak in his mouth; he should not swallow them deliberately, but if he swallows them accidentally, there is no harm done.

(55) If a fasting person is injured or suffers a nosebleed, or gets water or petrol in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast. If he gets dust, smoke or flies in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast either. Things that one cannot avoid swallowing, like one's own saliva or dust from grinding flour, do not break the fast. If a person gathers a lot of saliva in his mouth then swallows it on purpose, this does not break the fast according to the most correct opinion.[102]

If tears reach one's throat, if a person applies oil to his hair or moustache or if a person uses henna and then detects the taste of it in his throat, this does not break his fast. Using henna, kohl or oil does not break the fast.[103] This also applies to creams used to moisturize and soften the skin.

There is nothing wrong with smelling pleasant fragrances, using perfume, or applying scented creams and the like. There is noth-

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101 Al-Fataawaa al-Sa'diyyah, 245.

102 Al-Mughni by Ibn Qudaamah, 3/106.

103 See Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/233, 25/245.

ing wrong with a fasting person using incense as long as he does not use it as snuff.[104]

It is better not to use toothpaste during the day, and to leave it till night-time, because its characteristics are too strong.[105]

(56) To be on the safe side, it is better for the fasting person not to be treated with cupping (hijaamah). There is a strong difference of opinion on this matter. Ibn Taymiyah suggested that the one who has cupping done breaks his fast, but the one who does it does not break his fast.

(57) Smoking breaks the fast, and it cannot be used as an excuse not to fast. How can a sin be taken as an excuse?!

(58) Immersing oneself in water or wrapping oneself in wet clothes in order to cool down does not break the fast. There is nothing wrong with pouring water over one's head to obtain relief from heat and thirst. Swimming is disliked because it might make one break the fast (by swallowing water). If a person's work involves diving and he can be sure that he will not get water in his mouth, there is nothing wrong with this.

(59) If a person eats, drinks or has intercourse thinking that it is still night and then realizes that dawn has already broken, there is no harm done, because the aayah clearly states that it is permissible to do these things until one is sure that dawn has come. 'Abd al-Razzaaq reported with a saheeh isnaad going back to Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) that he said:

> **"Allaah has permitted you to eat and drink so long as there is any doubt in your mind."**[106]

[104] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/314.

[105] Al-Majaalis, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p. 72.

(60) If a person breaks his fast thinking that the sun has already set when it has not, he must make up the fast later on (according to the majority of scholars). This is due to the fact that the general principle is that it is still day, and a fact that is certain cannot be rejected in favor of something doubtful.[107]

If dawn breaks and a person still has food or drink in his mouth, the fuqahaa´ are in agreement that he should spit it out, and his fast is valid. This is like the ruling on one who eats or drinks because he forgets, then remembers he is fasting – if he hastens to spit out the food or drink in his mouth, his fast is still valid.

Rulings on Fasting for Women

(62) A woman who has reached the age of puberty but is too shy to tell anyone and thus does not fast must repent and make up the days she has missed. If the following Ramadan comes and she has not yet made up those days, she must also feed a poor person for each day as an act of expiation for delaying her fast. Her case is like that of a woman who fasts the days of her period out of shyness and does not make them up later.

If a woman does not know exactly how many days she has missed, she should fast until she is fairly certain that she has made up the days she had missed and not made up from previous Ramadans, and offer the expiation for delaying for each day. She

[106] Fath al-Baari, 4/135; this is also the opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 29/263.

[107] Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah thought that it was not necessary for a person in this situation to make up the fast.

can do this at the same time as fasting or separately, depending on what she is able to do.

(63) A woman should not fast – except during Ramadan – if her husband is present without his permission, but if he is traveling then it does not matter.

(64) When a menstruating woman sees the white substance which is discharged by the uterus when the period is finished by which a woman knows that she has now become taahir (pure), she should have the intention to fast from the night before and should fast. If she does not have a time when she knows she is taahir, she should insert a piece of cotton or something similar, and if it comes out clean, she should fast. If she starts to bleed again, she should stop fasting whether the blood is a flow or just spotting, because it breaks the fast as long as it comes at the time of the period.[108]

If the cessation of bleeding continues until Maghrib, and she has fasted with the intention from the night before, then her fast is valid. If a woman feels the movement of menstrual blood inside her but it does not come out until after the sun has set, her fast is valid and she does not have to make the day up later.

If a woman's period or post-natal bleeding ceases during the night, and she makes the intention to fast, but dawn comes before she is able to do ghusl, according to all the scholars her fast is valid.[109]

[108] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/154.

[109] Al-Fat'h, 4/148.

(65) If a woman knows that her period will come tomorrow, she should still continue her intention and keep fasting; she should not break her fast until she actually sees the blood.

(66) It is better for a menstruating woman to remain natural and accept what Allaah has decreed for her without taking any medication to prevent her from bleeding. She should be content with what Allaah accepts from her of breaking her fast during her period and making those days up later. This is how the Mothers of the Believers and the women of the Salaf were. (Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daà imah, 10/151). Moreover, there is medical evidence to prove that many of the things used to prevent bleeding are in fact harmful, and many women have suffered from irregular periods as a result of taking them. However, if a woman does that and takes something to stop the bleeding and then fasts, this is acceptable.

(67) Istihaadah (abnormal vaginal bleeding) does not have any effect on the validity of the fast.

(68) If a pregnant woman has a miscarriage and the fetus has taken shape or has a discernible outline of any part of the body, such as a head or hand, then her blood is considered nifaas (postpartum). If, however, she passes something that looks like a blood clot (‘alaq) or a chewed piece of meat (mudghah) that has no discernible human features, her bleeding is istihaadah (false menstruation). If she is able, she must fast, otherwise she can break her fast and make it up later on.[110] Once she becomes clean after having an operation to clean the womb (D&C), she should fast. The scholars stated that the embryo is considered to start taking shape after 80 days of pregnancy.

[110] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/224.

If a woman becomes clean from nifaas before forty days, she should fast and do ghusl so that she can pray.[111] If the bleeding resumes within forty days after the birth, she should stop fasting, because this is still nifaas. If the bleeding continues after the fortieth day, she should make the intention to fast and do ghusl (according to the majority of scholars), and any bleeding beyond the fortieth day is considered to be istihaadah (non-menstrual bleeding) – unless it coincides with the usual time of her period, in which case it is hayd (menstrual blood).

If a breastfeeding woman fasts during the day and sees a spot of blood during the night although she was clean during the day, her fast is still valid.[112]

(69) According to the most correct opinion, a woman who is pregnant or breastfeeding is regarded as being like one who is ill, so she is permitted not to fast. She is only obligated to make up the days that she missed, whether she fears for herself or for her child. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Allaah has lifted the obligation of fasting and part of the prayer from the traveler, and He has lifted the obligation of fasting from the pregnant and breastfeeding woman."**[113]

If a pregnant woman fasts and experiences some bleeding, her fast is still valid and does not affect it at all.[114]

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[111] Al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/360.

[112] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/150.

[113] Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3/85; he said (it is a) hasan hadeeth.

[114] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/225.

(70) In the case of a woman who is obligated to fast, if her husband has intercourse with her during the day in Ramadan with her consent, then the ruling that applies to him also applies to her. If however he forces her to do so, she should do her best to resist him. If she was unsuccessful, she does not have to offer expiation. Ibn ‘Aqeel (may Allaah have mercy on him) said that a woman whose husband has intercourse with her during the day in Ramadan whilst she is sleeping does not have to offer expiation.

As a precaution, she should make up that fast later on.[115]

A woman who knows that her husband cannot control himself should keep away from him and not adorn herself during the day inRamadan .

Women have to make up the fasts that they miss during Ramadan, even if they do so without their husbands’ knowledge. It is not a condition for an obligatory fast for a woman to have the permission of her husband. If a woman starts to observe an obligatory fast, she is not allowed to break it except for a legitimate reason. Her husband is not permitted to order her to break her fast when she is making up a day that she has missed; he is not allowed to have intercourse with her when she is making up a missed fast, and she is not allowed to obey him in that regard.[116]

In the case of voluntary fasts, a woman is not permitted to start a non-obligatory fast when her husband is present without his permission, due to the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ), in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

115 Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) was of the opinion that this did not invalidate her fast at all.

116 Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/353.

"No woman should fast when her husband is present except with his permission."[117]

Conclusion

In conclusion, this is what I was able to write about issues concerning fasting. I ask Allaah to help us to remember Him, thank Him and worship Him properly, and to conclude our Ramadan with forgiveness, and to save us from the Fire.

May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad, and his family and companions, and grant them peace.

[117] Reported by al-Bukhaari, 4793.

The Night Prayer in Ramadan (Al-Qiyaam or Taraweeh)

by:

Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid

1 – Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) said:

"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) used to encourage us to pray at night in Ramadan without making it obligatory. Then he said, 'Whoever prays at night in Ramadan out of faith and hope of Allah's reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven.' When the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) died, this is how things were (i.e., Taraaweeh was not prayed in congregation), and this is how they remained during the khilaafah of Abu Bakr (ﷺ), until the beginning of the khilaafah of 'Umar (ﷺ)."[1]

'Amr ibn Murrah al-Juhani said:

"A man from Qudaa'ah came to the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) and said, 'O Messenger of Allaah! What do you think if I testify that there is no god except Allaah, and that you, Muhammad, are His Messenger, and I pray the five daily prayers, and fast in the month (of Ramadan), and pray at night in Ramadan, and pay zakaah?' The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'Whoever dies on that will be among the siddeeqeen (those who tell the truth) and the martyrs.' "[2]

Laylat Al-Qadr and its Timing

2 – The best of Ramadan's nights is Laylat al-Qadr, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

[1] Muslim. (Editor)

[2] Ibn Khuzaimah. Declared authentic by Sheikh al-Albani. (Editor)

"Whoever prays at night during Laylat al-Qadr out of faith and hope of Allah's reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven."[3]

3 – According to the most correct opinion, it is the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan. Most of the ahaadeeth state this, such as the hadeeth of Zurr ibn Hubaysh, who said:

"I heard Ubayy ibn Ka'b saying – and it was said to him that 'Abd-Allaah ibn Mas'ood said: 'Whoever prays [the night prayer] the whole year will 'catch' Laylat al-Qadr!' – Ubayy (ﷺ) said: 'May Allaah have mercy on him, he did not want people to take it for granted and only stay up to pray on one night. By the One besides Whom there is no other god, it is in Ramadan – he was swearing without a doubt – and by Allaah, I do know which night it is. It is the night in which the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) commanded us to pray (qiyaam). It is the night the morning of which is the twenty-seventh, and its sign is that the sun rises on that morning white and without rays.' "[4]

In another report, this was attributed to the Prophet ﷺ).

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[3] Al-Bukhaari. (Editor)

[4] Reported by Muslim and others.

Praying Qiyaam in Congregation

It is allowed to pray qiyaam in congregation. Rather it is better than praying individually, for this is what the Prophet (ﷺ) did himself as well as explaining its virtues. Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) said:

> **"We fasted Ramadan with the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) and he did not lead us in qiyaam at all until there were only seven days left, when he led us in prayer until a third of the night had passed. When there were six days left, he did not lead us in qiyaam. When there were five days left, he led us in prayer until half the night had passed. I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, I wish that you had continued until the end of the night.' He said, 'If a man prays with the imaam[5] until he finishes, it will be counted as if he prayed the whole night.' When there were four nights left, he did not lead us in qiyaam. When there were three nights left, he brought together his family, his wives and the people, and led us in qiyaam until we were afraid that we would miss al-falaah. I asked, 'What is al-falaah?' he said, 'suhoor'[6]. Then he did not lead us in qiyaam for the rest of the month.' "[7]**

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[5] **Imaam:** Literally, leader. Here it is referring to the one who leads other in prayer. (Editor)

[6] **Suhoor:** the pre-dawn meal eaten prior to fasting that day. (Editor)

[7] Saheeh hadeeth reported by the authors of Sunan.

Why did not the Prophet (ﷺ) Continually Lead the Prayer in Congregation?

5 - The Prophet (ﷺ) did not lead them (the Sahaabah) in qiyaam for the rest of the month because he feared that it would then become obligatory, and they would not be able to do it, as is stated in the hadeeth of 'Aa`ishah reported in al-Saheehayn[8] and elsewhere. Following the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), that fear was no longer a factor, because Allaah had completed the religion. The reason for not praying qiyaam in congregation during Ramadan no longer applied, and the previous ruling, that congregational prayer is something prescribed in Islam, remained in effect. So 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) revived the practice, as is recorded in Saheeh al-Bukhaari and elsewhere.

Women may Pray Qiyaam in Congregation

Women can attend the prayers, as is stated in the hadeeth of Abu Dharr referred to above. Rather, it is also permissible to appoint an imaam just for them apart from the imaam of the men. It has been narrated that when 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) gathered the people to pray qiyaam, he appointed Ubayy ibn Ka'b to lead the men and Sulaymaan ibn Abi Hathmah to lead the women. 'Arfajah al-Thaqafi said:

" 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (رضي الله عنه) used to command the people to pray during the night in Ramadan, and he would appoint an imaam

[8] **Al-Saheehayn:** al-Bukhaari and Muslim. (Editor)

for the men and an imaam for the women. I was the imaam for the women."

This is fine in my view so long as the mosque is big enough in that they will not disturb one another.

Number of Rak'ahs of Qiyaam

7 – The number of rak'ahs is eleven, and it is preferable in our opinion not to exceed this number, following the practice of the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ), because he never did more than that in his life. 'Aa`ishah (رضي الله عنها) was asked about how he prayed in Ramadan. She said,

> **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) never prayed more than eleven rak'ahs (of qiyaam), whether during Ramadan or any other time. He would pray four, and don't ask me how beautiful or how long they were. Then he would pray four, and don't ask me how beautiful or how long they were. Then he would pray three."**[9]

8- A person may do less than this, even if it is only one rak'ah of witr, because of the evidence that the Prophet (ﷺ) did this and spoke about it.

With regard to him doing it: 'Aa`ishah (رضي الله عنها) was asked how many rak'ahs the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) used to pray in witr? She said,

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[9] Reported by al-Bukhaari, Muslim and others.

"He used to pray an odd number [by performing] four and [then] three [rak'ahs], or six and three, or ten and three. He would never pray less than seven or more than thirteen."[10]

With regard to him speaking about it, he said:

"Witr is true, so whoever wishes can pray five, and whoever wishes can pray three, and whoever wishes can pray one."[11]

Reciting Qur`aan in Qiyaam

9 – In regards to reciting from the Qur`aan during qiyaam, whether in Ramadan or at other times, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not set a limit or state what was too much or too little. His recitation used to vary, sometimes it would be long, at other times short. Sometimes in every rak'ah he would recite the equivalent of **'Yaa ayyuha'l-muzammil'** (Surah 73), which is twenty aayaat; sometimes he would recite the equivalent of fifty aayaat. He used to say,

"Whoever prays at night and reads one hundred aayaat will not be recorded as one of the negligent."[12]

According to another hadeeth:

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[10] Reported by Abu Dawood, Ahmad and others.

[11] Ibn Maajah. Al-Albani declared it is saheeh. (Editor)

[12] Abu Dawud. Al-Albaani declared it as Saheeh. (Editor)

"…and reads two hundred aayaat, will be recorded as one of the obedient and sincere believers."[13]

When he was sick, the Prophet (ﷺ) recited the seven long surahs in his night prayers, i.e., al-Baqarah, Aali 'Imraan, al-Nisaa´, al-Maa`idah, al-An'aam, al-A'raaf and al-Tawbah.

In the account of Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamaan praying behind the Prophet (ﷺ), in one rak'ah he recited al-Baqarah, al-Nisaa´ and Aali 'Imraan, and he recited them in a slow and measured tone. It is proven with the soundest (most saheeh) of isnaads that when 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) appointed Ubayy ibn Ka'b to lead the people in praying eleven rak'ahs in Ramadan, Ubayy used to recite aayaat by the hundreds until the people behind him would lean on sticks due to the length of the prayer, and they would not finish until just before Fajr.

It is also reported in a saheeh account that 'Umar gathered the Qur`aan reciters during Ramadan and told the fastest of them to recite thirty aayaat, the moderate ones to recite twenty-five aayaat, and the slowest ones to recite twenty aayaat.

However, if a person is praying qiyaam by himself, he can make it as long as he wishes; if others agree with the imaam, he may also make it as long as he wishes. The longer it is, the better, but a person should not go to extremes and spend the whole night in qiyaam except on rare occasions, following the example of the Prophet (ﷺ) who said:

"The best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad."[14]

[13] Al-Mundhiri. Al-Albaani declared it as Saheeh. (Editor)

[14] Muslim. (Editor)

If a person is praying as an imaam, he should make it only as long as is easy for the people behind him, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"If any of you leads the people in prayer, let him make it short, because among them are the young and the old, the weak, and those who have pressing needs. But if he is praying alone, let him make it as long as he likes."[15]

The Timing of Qiyaam

10 – The time for praying qiyaam is from after 'Ishaa until Fajr, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Allaah has added one more prayer for you, which is witr, so pray it between Salaat al-'Ishaa and Salaat al-Fajr."[16]

11 – Praying at the end of the night is better for those who can manage it, because the Prophet ﷺ) said:

"Whoever is afraid that he will not get up at the end of the night, let him pray witr at the beginning of the night, but whoever feels that he will be able to get up at the end of the night, let him pray witr at the end of the night, for prayer at the end of the night is witnessed [by the angels], and that is better."[17]

[15] Muslim. (Editor)

[16] Narrated by Ahmed. Al-Albaani declared it as Saheeh in his 'Silsilah', p.108. (Editor)

[17] Muslim. (Editor)

12 – If it is the matter of choosing between praying in jamaa'ah (congregation) at the beginning of the night and praying alone at the end of the night, it is preferable to pray with the jamaa'ah, because that is counted as if one had prayed the whole night through.

This is what the Sahaabah did at the time of 'Umar (ﷺ). 'Abd al-Rahmaan ibn 'Abd al-Qaari said:

"I went out with 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab to the mosque one night during Ramadan and saw the people scattered throughout the mosque, some praying individually, and some praying in small groups. He said, **'By Allaah, I think that if I gathered all of them behind one reader it would be better.'** So he resolved to do that, and he gathered them behind Ubayy ibn Ka'b. Then I went with him on another night, and the people were all praying behind their reader, and 'Umar said, **'What a good innovation this is. What they sleep and miss – meaning the latter part of the night – is better than what they are doing,'** – the people used to pray qiyaam at the beginning of the night."

Zayd ibn Wahb said: "Abd-Allaah used to lead us in prayer in Ramadan, and he used to finish at night."

13 – The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade praying witr as three rak'ahs, and explained this by saying:

"Do not make it resemble Salaat al- Maghrib."[18]

Therefore the person who wants to pray three rak'ahs for witr must find a way to make it different (from Maghrib). There are two ways he can do this: either by giving salaam after the first two rak'ahs, which is the best way; or by not sitting after the first two

[18] Daraqutni, al-Haakim. Declared saheeh by Hafidh al-'Iraaqi. (Editor)

rak‘ahs (i.e., praying three rak‘ahs non-stop). And Allaah knows best.

Recitation during Three Rak‘ahs of Witr

14 – It is Sunnah to recite **“Sabbih ismi Rabbika al-A’laa”** (Surah al-A’laa) in the first rak‘ah, **“Qul Yaa ayyuha’l-Kaafiroon”** (Surah al-Kaafiroon) in the second rak‘ah, and **“Qul Huwa Allaahu Ahad”** (Surah al-Ikhlaas) in the third rak‘ah. Sometimes **“Qul a‘oodhu bi Rabbi’l-Falaq”** (Surah al-Falaq) and **“Qul a‘oodhu bi Rabbi’l-Naas”** (Surah al-Naas) may be added as well.

It was reported in a saheeh report that the Prophet (ﷺ) once recited one hundred aayaat of Surah al-Nisaa´ in one rak‘ah of witr.

Du‘aa al- Qunoot

15 – A person may also humble himself before Allaah by reciting the du‘aa which the Prophet (ﷺ) taught to his grandson al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه), which is:

‹‹ اللّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ وَعَافِنِي فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ وَتَوَلَّنِي فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ، وَبَارِكْ لِيْ فِيمَا أَعْطَيْتَ، وَقِنِي شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلاَ يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْكَ، وَإِنَّهُ لاَ يَذِلُّ مَن وَّالَيْتَ، وَلاَ يَعِزُّ مَنْ عَادَيْتَ، تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ، لاَ مَنْجَا مِنْكَ إِلاَّ إِلَيْكَ ››

"Allaahumma'hdinee fiman hadayta wa 'aafinee fiman 'aafayta wa tawallanee fiman tawallayta wa baarik lee fi-maa a'tayta wa qinee sharra maa qadayt, fa innaka taqdee wa laa yuqdaa 'alayk. Wa innahu laa yadhillu man waalayta wa laa ya'izzu man 'aadayt. Tabaarakta Rabbanaa wa ta'aalayt. Laa manjaa minka illa ilayk."[19]

"O Allaah, guide me along with those whom You have guided, pardon me along with those whom You have pardoned, be an ally to me along with those whom You are an ally to, and bless for me that which You have be-stowed. Protect me from the evil You have decreed, for verily You decree and none can decree over You. For surety, he whom You show allegiance to is never abased and he whom You take an enemy is never honored and mighty. O our Lord, Blessed and Exalted are You. There is no refuge from You except with You."

Sometimes one may send blessings on the Prophet (ﷺ), and there is nothing wrong with adding other du'as that are known from the Sunnah.

16 – There is nothing wrong with reciting the Qunoot after the rukoo', or with adding curses against the kuffaar, sending bless-ings on the Prophet (ﷺ) or praying for the Muslims in the second half of Ramadan, because it is proven that the imaam used to do this at the time of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). At the end of the hadeeth of 'Abd al-Rahmaan ibn 'Ubayd al-Qaari mentioned above, it says: **"…They used to curse the kuffaar in the middle, saying,**

[19] Abu Dawud. Declared as Saheeh by Al-Albani. (Editor)

‹‹ اللَّهُمَّ قَاتِلِ الْكَفَرَةَ الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِكَ، وَيُكَذِّبُونَ رُسُلَكَ، وَلاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِوَعْدِكَ، وَخَالِفْ بَيْنَ كَلِمَتِهِمْ، وَأَلْقِ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ، وَأَلْقِ عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزَكَ وَعَذَابَكَ، إِلَٰهِ الْحَقِّ ››

'Allaahumma qaatil al-kafarata alladheena yasuddoona 'an sabeelik, wa yukadhdhiboona rusulak wa laa yu´minoona bi wa'dik. Wa khaalif bayna kalimatihim wa alqi fi quloobihim al-ru'b wa alqi 'alayhim rijzaka wa 'adhaabak ilaah al-haqq.' "[20]

'O Allaah, destroy the kuffaar who are trying to prevent people from following Your path, who deny Your Messengers and who do not believe in Your promise (the Day of Judgment). Make them disunited, fill their hearts with terror and send Your wrath and punishment against them, O God of Truth.' "

Then he would send blessings on the Prophet (ﷺ), and pray for good for the Muslims as much as he could, and seek forgiveness for the believers.

After he had finished cursing the kuffaar, sending blessings on the Prophet, seeking forgiveness for the believing men and women and asking for his own needs, he would say:

‹‹ اللّهُمَ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ، وَلَكَ نُصَلِّيْ وَنَسْجُدُ، وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْعَى وَنَحْفِدُ، وَنَرْجُوْ رَحْمَتَكَ رَبَّنَا، وَنَخَافُ عَذَابَكَ الْجِدَّ، إِنَّ عَذَابَكَ لِمَنْ عَادَيْتَ مُلْحِقٌ ››

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[20] Ibn Khuzaimah. Graded as Saheeh by Al-Albani. (Editor)

"Allaahumma iyyaaka na'bud wa laka nusalli wa najud, wa ilayka nas'aa wa nahfud, wa narju rahmataka rabbanaa wa nakhaafu 'adhaabak al-jadd. Inna 'adhaabaka liman 'aadayta mulhaq."[21]

"O Allaah, You do we worship, to You do we pray and prostrate, for Your sake we strive and toil. We place our hope in Your Mercy, O our Lord, and we fear Your mighty punishment, for Your punishment will certainly overtake the one whom You have taken as an enemy."

Then he would say "Allaahu akbar" and go down in sujood.

What Should be Said at the End of Witr

17 – It is Sunnah to say at the end of witr (before or after the salaam):

‹‹ اللّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمُعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لاَ أُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ ››

"Allaahumma innee a'oodhu bi ridaaka min sakhatika wa bi mu'aafaatika min 'uqoobatika, wa a'oodhu bika minka. La uhsee thanaa`an 'alayka, anta kamaa athnayta 'alaa nafsik."[22]

"O Allaah, I seek refuge in Your good pleasure from Your wrath, and in Your protection from Your punish-

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[21] Ibn Khuzaimah. Graded as Saheeh by Al-Albani. (Editor)

[22] Abu Dawud. Graded as Saheeh by Al-Albani. (Editor)

ment. I seek refuge with You from You. I cannot praise You enough, and You are as You have praised Yourself.”

18 – When he gave salaam at the end of witr, he said:

‹‹ سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُوسِ، سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُوسِ، سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُوسِ ››

“Subhaan il-Malik il-Quddoos, subhaan il-Malik il-Quddoos, subhaan il-Malik il-Quddoos.”

“Glory be to the Sovereign, the Most Holy, Glory be to the Sovereign, the Most Holy, Glory be to the Sovereign, the Most Holy,”

…elongating the syllables, and raising his voice the third time.[23]

Two Rak‘ahs after Witr

19 – A person may pray two rak‘ahs after witr if he wishes, because it is proven that the Prophet (ﷺ) did this. Rather, he [even] said,

“This traveling is exhausting and difficult, so after any one of you prays witr, let him pray two rak‘ahs. If he wakes up, this is fine, otherwise these two rak‘ahs will be counted for him.”

[23] Nasaa`i. Graded as Saheeh by Al-Albani. (Editor)

20 – It is Sunnah to recite **“Idhaa zulzilat al-ard”** (Surah al-Zalzalah) and **“Qul yaa ayyuha’l-kaafiroon”** (Surah al-Kaafiroon) in these two rak‘ahs.

-From “Qiyaamu Ramadan” by al-Albaani

Selected Verdicts regarding the Taraaweeh

(Adapted from the works of Sheikh Salih al-Munajjid and Sheikh Abdul-Azeez bin Baaz)

The Number of Rak'ahs in Taraaweeh

Q. Of what number of rak'ahs does the Taraaweeh prayer consist? Does it have a specific number? What number of rak'ahs is best?

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. All Praise is due to Allah, and may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon Allah's Messenger, and upon his family, companions, and whoever follows his guidance.

What has authentically been reported of the Prophet (ﷺ) suggests that there is much flexibility with respect to the number of rak'ahs in the salaat al-layl (the night prayer), and they are not restricted to a certain number. However, it is the Sunnah that the believer, male and female, pray in pairs of two, making tasleem (saying "As-Salamu alaykum wa rahmatullah" concluding the prayer) at the end of every two [rak'ahs].

Amongst these ahaadeeth is one which has been reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim. In this hadeeth of ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Salaat al-layl is in pairs of two; whosoever amongst you fears the break of dawn let him pray one rak'ah, for it will be a witr for all the rak'ahs he has previously offered."**

His (ﷺ) saying, **“Salaat al-layl is in pairs of two,”** is a declarative statement but has the implication [in usool al-fiqh] of a command; it is equivalent to his (ﷺ) saying, **“Pray in the night in pairs of two.”**

What is intended here by praying in pairs of two is that the tasleem is to be pronounced after every two rak‘ahs. Then, the prayer is to be concluded by performing one rak‘ah, which is known as the witr prayer. This is how the Prophet (ﷺ) used to perform his prayer. He (ﷺ) would pray in the night in pairs of two, and then pray one rak‘ah of witr, as was described in different narrations by ‘Aa`ishah, ibn ‘Abbaas, as well as other Sahaabah, may Allah be pleased with them all. ‘Aa`ishah (رضي الله عنها) said,

> **“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would perform ten rak‘ahs of prayer, pronouncing the tasleem after every two. He would then perform one rak‘ah of witr.”**

And she (رضي الله عنها) also said,

> **“The Prophet (ﷺ) would not increase the number of rak‘ahs in the night prayer more than eleven, neither in Ramadan nor in any other month. He would pray four rak‘ahs, let alone their excellence and their length, then he would pray an-other four, let alone their excellence and their length, and then he would pray three...”** [al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Some people have mistakenly presumed that these four rak‘ahs are to be performed with one tasleem, but this is not correct. What is meant here is that the Prophet (ﷺ) would conclude the prayer by pronouncing the tasleem after every two rak‘ahs, as is mentioned in the previous hadeeth as well as in his (ﷺ) saying, **“The night prayer is in pairs of two.”** Another evidence is

what has been authentically reported by al-Bukhari on the authority of ibn 'Abbaas, that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to pronounce the tasleem after every two rak'ahs.

In 'Aa`ishah's (رضي الله عنها) statement, there is an evidence that it is preferred in the night prayer, whether it be in Ramadan or in any other month, that one performs eleven rak'ahs, pronouncing the tasleem after every two, and then concludes the prayer with one rak'ah of witr.

It has also been narrated by 'Aa`ishah and other Sahaabah that the Prophet (ﷺ) would also at times pray thirteen rak'ah.

This shows that what is preferred and what has been most authentically reported of the Prophet (ﷺ) is that one performs eleven or thirteen rak'ah during the Taraaweeh. Of the two, performing eleven rak'ahs is better, but if he was to perform thirteen, including the witr, then this is also from the Sunnah and is good. Praying this number is more gentle on people. It is more conducive to the Imaam's khushoo' and recitation, its beauty, his reflection upon its verses, as well as the rukoo' and sujood. It also does not lead him to hasten his prayer.

If one were to pray twenty-three rak'ah, including the witr as did 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and other Sahaabah in various nights of Ramadan, then there is no harm in this, for there is much flexibility in this matter. It has been reported in the hadeeth of 'Aa`ishah (رضي الله عنها) that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and other Sahaabah prayed eleven rak'ah including the witr, and in other reports that he prayed twenty-three. It has also been reported that he ordered the Sahaabi (Companion) whom he appointed to lead the night prayer to pray eleven rak'ah, as has been reported that he ordered him to pray twenty-three. This confirms the fact that there is much flexibility in this matter, as does his (ﷺ) saying, **"The night prayer is in pairs of two."**

However, as we stated before, it is preferred that one pray eleven or thirteen rak'ah, as this is what the Prophet (ﷺ) himself did. And as mentioned, praying eleven rak'ah is best, due to the statement of 'Aa`ishah (رضي الله عنها). What is meant in this statement is that he would not increase the number of rak'ahs most of the time, and that is due to the fact that she and other Sahaabah also reported that he (ﷺ) performed thirteen rak'ah. This implies that he would sometimes increase the prayer more than eleven rak'ah.

'Aa`ishah (رضي الله عنها) had the most understanding in religious matters and was the most knowledgeable of the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) from amongst the Sahaabiyaat. She would investigate and question what the Prophet (ﷺ) did when she was in his (ﷺ) presence, and would in turn inform other Sahaabah. She would ask the other wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) and Sahaabah as well. Because of her devotion to knowledge and her extensive memory, she preserved a substantial amount of knowledge and numerous ahaadeeth of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

Therefore, if the Prophet (ﷺ) varied his prayer by performing eleven rak'ah in some nights and thirteen in others, then there is no harm in that, for it is all considered Sunnah. However, what is not permissible is that one pray four rak'ahs uninterruptedly. Rather, it is obligatory to pray in pairs of two due to his (ﷺ) saying, **"The night prayer is in pairs of two,"** for this is a declarative statement which [in usool al-fiqh] has the implication of a command.

Also, if one were to pray the witr prayer by performing three or five rak'ahs uninterruptedly with one sitting, there is no harm in that either, for the Prophet (ﷺ) also prayed in this manner. However, one is not to pray four, six, or eight rak'ahs uninterruptedly, as this has not been reported of the Prophet (ﷺ). It also contra-

dicts his command, **"The night prayer is in pairs of two."** And if one were to uninterruptedly perform seven or nine rak'ahs, then there is no harm in that either. But what is preferred is that one sits for the first tashahhud after the sixth or the eighth rak'ah and then stands and completes the rest of the prayer.

All of this has been related of the Prophet (ﷺ) and there is much flexibility in this matter. But what is best is to pronounce the tasleem after every two rak'ahs, and then to offer one rak'ah of witr prayer, as previously quoted in the hadeeth of ibn 'Umar.

This is what is preferred and is easier for the people, as some people might have other obligations to fulfill and might need to leave after two, four, or six rak'ahs. So what is best and more befitting is that the Imaam pray in pairs of two rak'ahs, and not perform five or seven continuously. However, if he were to do that at times to clarify the Sunnah, there is no harm.

As far as the shaf'a and witr are concerned, it is not befitting that they be prayed similar to the Maghrib prayer [by sitting after two rak'ahs and standing for the third without pronouncing the tasleem], and is at the very least makrooh. This is due to the prohibition of the Prophet (ﷺ) in making it resemble the Maghrib prayer. One is to uninterruptedly pray three rak'ahs with one tasleem and one sitting, and Tawfeeq is from Allah.[24]

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[24] "Concerning Taraaweeh" by Sheikh ibn Baz, Dar-ut-Tawheed Publications.

Completing with the Imaam

Q. The most correct opinion is that the number of rak'ahs for Taraaweeh is eleven, but I pray in a mosque where they do twenty-one rak'ahs. Can I leave the mosque after the tenth rak'ah, or is it better to complete the twenty one rak'ahs with them?

A. It is better to stay with the imaam until he finishes, even if he is doing more than eleven rak'ahs, because it is permissible to pray the extra rak'ahs, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Whoever prays qiyaam with the imaam until he finishes, Allaah will record it as if he prayed the whole night."**[25]

…and because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Prayer at night should be two by two (rak'ahs), and when dawn approaches, pray one for witr."**[26]

There is no doubt that adhering to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) is better and brings more reward, so long as it is done properly and without haste, but if it is the matter of a choice between leaving the imaam because of the number of rak'ahs or going along with the extra that he does, it is better to go along with him, because of the ahaadeeth referred to above. At the same time, you should advise the imaam to follow the Sunnah.[27]

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[25] Reported by al-Nisaa`i and others. Sunan al-Nisaa'i, "Baab Qiyaam Shahr Ramadaan."

[26] Reported by the seven; this version reported by al-Nisaa`i.

[27] "The Night Prayer in Ramadan" by Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid.

Reciting the Entire Qur`aan in Taraaweeh

Q. Is it preferred that the Imaam complete the entire Qur`aan in Taraaweeh?

A. There is great flexibility in this matter. I do not know of any evidence that suggests that it is better, except that some scholars have mentioned that it is mustahab for the Imaam to recite the entire Qur`aan for the congregation in order that they receive the opportunity to listen to it in its entirety. However, this is not a clear evidence. What is most important is that the Imaam has khushoo' in his prayer, that he feels at ease, and that the people benefit from him, even if he were not to complete except half of the Qur`aan. It is not important that he completes it, but rather that the people benefit and find peace in his prayer, his khushoo', and his recitation. However, if he found it easy to complete, then all praise is for Allah, but if he did not, then what he did recite was sufficient, for his concern should be for the people and that they feel khushoo' in their prayer. The benefit of the people is more important than the mere completion of the Qur`aan, but if he were to finish the Qur`aan without causing difficulty for the people, then this is well and good.[28]

The Imaam Holding a Mushaf

Q. Is it permissible for the Imaam to hold the mushaf (written transcript of the Qur`aan) while leading the prayer?

[28] "Concerning Taraaweeh" by Sheikh ibn Baz, Dar-ut-Tawheed Publications.

A. The correct opinion is that there is no harm in this. Though there is a difference amongst the scholars, the correct opinion is that there is no harm in that he recites from the mushaf, whether it be that he has not memorized the Qur`aan, or if his memorization is weak. In this case, it is more beneficial to his own self as well as the congregation, so there is no harm in it. Imaam al-Bukhari mentioned in a mu'allaq hadeeth on the authority of 'Aa`ishah (ﷺ), that her slave Dhakwaan would lead her in prayer in the night while reciting from a mushaf. The general principle is that it is allowed, and the hadeeth of 'Aa`ishah (ﷺ) supports this. However, if it is easy for the Imaam to recite from his memory, then this is more befitting. It is more focused and less distracting to the heart, for carrying a mushaf entails picking it up, placing it down, searching through its pages, and turning to it when needed. Hence, if one can do without it, then that is better.[29]

One of the Followers Holding a Mushaf

Q. Is it permissible for one or more from the congregation to carry a mushaf during the Taraaweeh prayer?

A. I do not know of any evidence to support this. It is apparent though, that one should have khushoo' and feel at peace in his prayer and not carry a mushaf. One should put his right hand over one's left hand as is the Sunnah. One should place one's right hand on one's left hand, wrist, and forearm and put them on one's chest. This is what is preferred and more correct. Carrying a mushaf prevents one from doing these acts of Sunnah and

[29] "Concerning Taraaweeh" Sheikh ibn Baz, Dar-ut-Tawheed publications.

prevents one from concentrating on the Imaam and his recitation. Rather, it keeps one's heart and eyes busy in examining its pages and verses. So what I believe is that leaving it is the Sunnah. One should listen and concentrate on the recitation rather than use the mushaf. If someone from the congregation comes to know that the Imaam has made a mistake, then he should correct him, and if he does not, then someone else should correct him. However, if the Imaam does happen to make a mistake in recitation and he is not corrected, it does not influence the validity of the prayer. A mistake only harms the prayer if it is made in Surah al-Faatihah, for it is a rukn (pillar) of the prayer. However, if one were to carry a mushaf and correct the Imaam when it necessitates, then there may be no harm in that. As for every person carrying a mushaf, this is contrary to the Sunnah.[30]

Supplicating after the Completion of the Qur`aan

Q. What is the ruling concerning supplicating after the completion of the Qur`aan?

A. Our pious predecessors did not leave reciting the supplications made upon the completion of the Qur`aan during the prayer of Ramadan, and we do not know of any difference in this regard. What is best is that the Imaam should supplicate, but not lengthen the supplication. He should seek to recite those supplications that are beneficial and inclusive in meaning, as 'Aa`ishah (رضي الله عنها) said,

[30] "Concerning Taraaweeh" by Sheikh ibn Baz, Dar-ut-Tawheed Publications.

"The Prophet (ﷺ) was fond of those supplications that were inclusive in meaning and refrained from other supplications."

So what is better is that the Imaam should seek to supplicate with those which are inclusive in meaning without lengthening them. He should recite the supplication, **"O Allah guide me from those whom you have guided…"** in the Qunoot as has been reported in a hasan hadeeth. Along with this, he should recite other good and easy supplications, as in the addition of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), without lengthening them, thus in fact causing burden and inconvenience to the people. This is how the supplication upon the completion the Qur`aan should be; he should supplicate with what is easy for him, and that they should be inclusive in meaning. He should start by praising Allah and sending peace and prayers upon the Prophet (ﷺ), and then complete the supplication with what is easy, whether it be in the night prayer or in the witr. He should not lengthen it so as to cause distress or inconvenience.

This is what is known from our pious predecessors, and this example was followed by later generations. Our scholars and teachers along with their dedication for the Sunnah followed this as well, the latter emulating the former. This is considered to be an obvious fact by the scholars of the Da'wah of Tawheed, who are known to be keen in the Sunnah. The fact of the matter remains that there is no harm or blame in this, if Allah wills, but rather that this is something that is deemed praiseworthy, because by doing this one seeks response to one's supplication after the completion of the Book of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). When Anas (رضي الله عنه) would complete the Qur`aan, he would gather his family and supplicate outside of the prayer. This is just as well whether it is within the

prayer or outside it because supplication has been legislated at both times, so there can be no objection in this.

And it is well known that upon reciting a verse which describes the punishment or the mercy of Allah, one should supplicate as the Prophet (ﷺ) did in the night prayer. This is similar to the matter at hand in that it is also legislated to supplicate after the completion of the Qur`aan. The point of contention is only whether one should supplicate within the prayer. As for supplicating outside of it, then I do not know of any difference of opinion other than that it is deemed praiseworthy, but the difference lies within the prayer. I do not know anyone from our pious predecessors who has objected to supplicating within the prayer, and I do not know anyone who has objected to supplication outside it. So this is what is used as a basis, that it was something known to our predecessors, of which the former as well as the latter acted upon. Whosoever says that this is wrong should come with some evidence, for the burden of proof does not lie upon the one who acts according to what our pious predecessors did. The evidence is to be established by the one who says that it is wrong and that it is an innovation. This is what our pious predecessors of the Ummah chose and tread upon. The latter generations took example from the former, and amongst them were the scholars, the virtuous, and the scholars of hadeeth. The recitation of various supplications in the night prayer is something known to be from the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ), and what is recited upon the completion of the Qur`aan is within this class of supplication.[31]

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[31] "Concerning Taraaweeh" by Sheikh ibn Baz, Dar-ut-Tawheed Publications.

Qunoot in the Witr and Fajr prayers

Q. What is the ruling regarding the supplication of the Qunoot in the witr and Fajr prayers?

A. The Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) is to supplicate with the Qunoot in the witr prayer, but if one leaves it at times, then there is no harm. As for making the Qunoot in the Fajr prayer consistently, there is no legislation for this; rather, it is an innovation. It has been reported by Ahmad, at-Tirmidhi, an-Nasaa`i, and ibn Maajah, may Allah have mercy on them, on the authority of Sa'd bin Taariq bin Ashyam al-Ashja'i that he said:

> **"O father, verily you have observed prayer behind the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmaan, and 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with them all. Did they recite the Qunoot in the Fajr prayer?" He replied, "My son, this is an innovation."**

In this hadeeth, Taariq clarified that this act is an innovation. However, it has been reported on the authority of Anas, Abu Hurairah and others that the Prophet (ﷺ) would make Qunoot at times of misfortune in the Fajr prayer as well as others. If a trial has befallen the Muslims from the enemy, a calamity occurs amongst the believers, or a squadron of believers is killed or its likes, it is legislated for the Imaams of the masaajid to make Qunoot in the last rak'ah of the Fajr prayer after the rukoo'. It is to be made for as long as the calamity lasts, whether it be a day or a month, and then it is to be discontinued. This is the Sunnah: that it should be done in times of crisis or necessity without it being consistent. As for consistently reciting it, whether in the Fajr prayer or others [other than witr], it is in opposition to the Sunnah. As for the ahaadeeth which report that the recitation of

the Qunoot should be consistent in the Fajr prayer, they are all weak according to the scholars of hadeeth, and Tawfeeq is from Allah.[32]

Raising the Hands in Qunoot

Q. What is the ruling concerning the raising of the hands in the Qunoot of witr?

A. It has been legislated to raise the hands in the Qunoot of the witr prayer. The Qunoot of witr is of the same class of supplications as the Qunoot recited in times of calamity, and it has been related by al-Bayhaqi with an authentic chain of narration that the Prophet (ﷺ) raised his hands when he supplicated with the Qunoot in times of calamity.[33]

Joining Taraaweeh with the Niyyah of 'Ishaa

Q. If a person came to a masjid and found the congregation praying Taraaweeh, and he had not yet prayed 'Ishaa, can he join them in prayer with the niyyah of praying 'Ishaa?

A. There is no harm in one praying with the niyyah of 'Ishaa along with others who are praying Taraaweeh. This is the correct opinion of the two held by the scholars. Once the Imaam pronounces the tasleem, he should stand and complete the remain-

[32] "Concerning Taraaweeh" by Sheikh ibn Baz, Dar-ut-Tawheed Publications.

[33] "Concerning Taraaweeh" by Sheikh ibn Baz, Dar-ut-Tawheed Publications.

der of his prayer. It has been reported in al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Mu'aadh bin Jabal (ﷺ), that he used to pray the 'Ishaa prayer with the Prophet (ﷺ), and then return to his people and lead them in theirs, and the Prophet (ﷺ) did not object to that. This proves the permissibility of praying an obligatory prayer behind one praying a supererogatory one. It has been reported in Saheeh al-Bukhari, that the Prophet (ﷺ) in some types of the prayer of fear prayed two rak'ah leading one group, and then prayed another two with the next, making tasleem at the end. So the first two rak'ahs were considered obligatory for him, while the second was considered supererogatory, but obligatory for the congregation.[34]

Reading Qur`aan or Praying Nawaafil?

Q. Which is better during the day in Ramadan – reading Qur`aan or praying voluntary prayers?

A. Praise be to Allaah. The Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) was to do a lot of different kinds of worship during Ramadan. Jibreel used to review the Qur`aan with him at night, and when Jibreel met with him, he was more generous in charity than the blowing wind. He was the most generous of people, and he was at his most generous in Ramadan. At this time he used to give more in charity and treat people even more kindly; he would read more Qur`aan, pray more, recite more dhikr, and spend time in I'tikaaf (retreat). This is the guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ) in this aspect of this holy month.

[34] "Concerning Taraaweeh" by Sheikh ibn Baz, Dar-ut-Tawheed Publications.

As to whether it is better to read Qur`aan or to pray voluntary prayers, this depends on people's circumstances, and the true evaluation of this is up to Allaah, because He knows all things.[35]

A specific action may be better in the case of any given individual, and another may be better for another individual, according to the degree to which a particular action brings a person closer to Allaah. Some people may be influenced more by nafil prayers and may focus on them and do them properly, which will bring them closer to Allaah than other deeds might, so in their case those deeds are better. And Allaah knows best.[36]

Adding another Rak'ah to the Imaam's Witr

Q. When the Imaam pronounces tasleem in the witr, some people stand and perform another rak'ah in order that they may pray it (the witr) in the last part of the night. What is the ruling concerning this? Is this considered completing the prayer with the Imaam?

We do not know of any harm in this, as the scholars have mentioned, because a person does this in order that he pray the witr at a latter time in the last part of the night. It will be counted as if he stood with the Imaam until he completed the prayer, since in fact he did stand with the Imaam until he turned away, and merely added another rak'ah. He did this in the interest of the religion, in order that the witr be performed in the last part of the

[35] From "Al-Jawaab al-Saheeh min Ahkaam Salaat al-Layl wa'l-Taraaweeh", by Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, p. 45.

[36] "The Night Prayer in Ramadan" by Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid.

night, so there is no harm in this. He is not disqualified from gaining the reward of standing with the Imaam. Although he did not complete it along with him, he did stand with the Imaam until the Imaam completed his prayer; rather he merely delayed it shortly.[37]

[37] "Concerning Taraaweeh" by Sheikh ibn Baz, Dar-ut-Tawheed Publications.

I'tikaaf

by:

Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid

Definition

I’tikaaf means staying in the mosque for a specific purpose, which is to worship Allaah (may He be glorified). It is prescribed in Islam and is mustahab (recommended) according to the consensus of the scholars. Imaam Ahmad said, as was narrated from him by Abu Dawud: “I have not heard from any of the scholars that it is anything other than Sunnah.”

Al-Zuhri (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “How strange the Muslims are! They have given up I’tikaaf, despite the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) never abandoned this practice from the time he came to Madeenah until his death.”

The Benefits of I’tikaaf

There are many hidden benefits in the acts of worship and much wisdom behind them. The basis of all deeds is the heart, as the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said:

> **“In the body there is an organ which if it is sound, the entire body will be sound, and if it is corrupt, the entire body will be corrupt. That organ is the heart.”**[38]

What corrupts the heart most is distractions and preoccupations – such as food, drink, sex, talking too much, sleeping too much and socializing too much, and other distractions – which divert people from turning to Allaah and cause the heart to be unfocused and unable to concentrate on worshipping Allaah. So Al-

[38] Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 52; Muslim, 1599.

laah has prescribed acts of worship, such as fasting, to protect the heart from the negative effects of these distractions. Fasting deprives a person of food and drink and sex during the day, and this denial of excessive enjoyments is reflected in the heart, which gains more strength for treading the path to Allaah and frees it from the chains of these distractions which distract a person from thinking about the Hereafter by occupying him with worldly concerns.

Just as fasting is a shield which protects the heart from the influences of physical distractions such as excessive indulgence in food, drink and sex, so I'tikaaf offers an immense hidden benefit, which is a protection from the effects of excessive socializing. For people may take socializing to extremes, until it has a similar effect on a person to the effects of over-eating, as the poet said:

عدوك من صديقك مستفاد فلا تستكثرن من الصّحاب،

فإن الداء أكثر ما تـــــراه يكون من الطعام أو الشراب.

"Your enemy was once your friend

…so donot have too many compa nions,

for indeed you see most diseases

…are a result from food and drink."

I'tikaaf also offers protection from the evil consequences of talking too much, because a person usually does I'tikaaf on his own, turning to Allaah by praying Qiyaam al-Layl, reading Qur`aan, making Dhikr, recitingdu'aa , and so on.

It also offers protection from sleeping too much, because when a person makes I'tikaaf in the mosque, he devotes his time to draw-

ing closer to Allaah by doing different kinds of acts of worship; he does not stay in the mosque to sleep.

Undoubtedly a person's success in freeing himself from socializing, talking and sleeping too much will help him to make his heart turn towards Allaah and will protect him from the opposite.

The Connection between Fasting and I'tikaaf

No doubt when a person has all the means of purifying his heart by keeping away from all the things that can distract him from worship, this will be more effective in helping him to turn towards Allaah with devotion and humility. Hence the Salaf (pious predecessors) regarded it as mustahab (recommended) to combine fasting and I'tikaaf. Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

> "It was not reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) ever did I'tikaaf when he was not fasting. Indeed, 'Aa`ishah said:
>
> **'There is no I'tikaaf except with fasting.'**[39]
>
> Allaah did not mention I'tikaaf except in conjunction with fasting, and the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) did not do I'tikaaf except in conjunction with fasting.
>
> The most correct opinion concerning the evidence which the majority of the Salaf agreed upon is: "That fasting is a condi-

[39] Narrated by Abu Dawood, 2473.

tion of I'tikaaf. This is the view that was regarded as most correct by Shaykh al-Islam Abu'l-'Abbaas Ibn Taymiyah."[40]

The view that fasting is a condition of I'tikaaf was narrated from Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbaas. It was also the view of Maalik, al-Awzaa'i and Abu Haneefah, and different opinions were narrated from Ahmad and al-Shaafi'i.

With regard to the words of Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him), "It was not reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) ever did I'tikaaf when he was not fasting," there is some room for debate. It was reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) did I'tikaaf in Shawwaal (narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1928, and Muslim, 1173), but it was not proven whether he was fasting or not on these days when he did I'tikaaf.

The most correct view is that fasting is mustahab (recommended) for the one who does I'tikaaf, but it is not a condition of his I'tikaaf being valid.

With the Prophet (ﷺ) in his I'tikaaf

The Prophet (ﷺ) did I'tikaaf during the first ten days of Ramadan, then in the middle ten days, seeking Laylat al-Qadr, then it became clear to him that it was in the last ten days, after which he always spent them (the last ten days) in I'tikaaf.

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said:

[40] Zaad al-Ma'aad, 2/87, 88.

"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) used to do I'tikaaf during the middle ten days of the month, and when the night of the twentieth had passed and the twenty-first had begun, he would go back to his home, and those who were doing I'tikaaf with him also went home. Then one month he made I'tikaaf on that night when he used to go home. Then he addressed the people, commanding them as Allaah willed, and then he said:

'I used to spend these ten days in I'tikaaf, but now I want to spend these last ten days in I'tikaaf, so whoever used to do I'tikaaf with me, let him stay in his place of I'tikaaf. I was shown that night (Laylat al-Qadr) then I was made to forget it, so seek it during the last ten nights, in the odd-numbered nights. And I saw myself prostrating in water and mud.'"

Abu Sa'eed said:

"It rained on the night of the twenty-first, and the roof of the mosque leaked in the place where the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) was praying. I looked at him when he had finished praying Subh (Fajr), and his face was wet with water and mud, so what he (ﷺ) had seen came to pass. And this was one of the signs of his Prphethood."

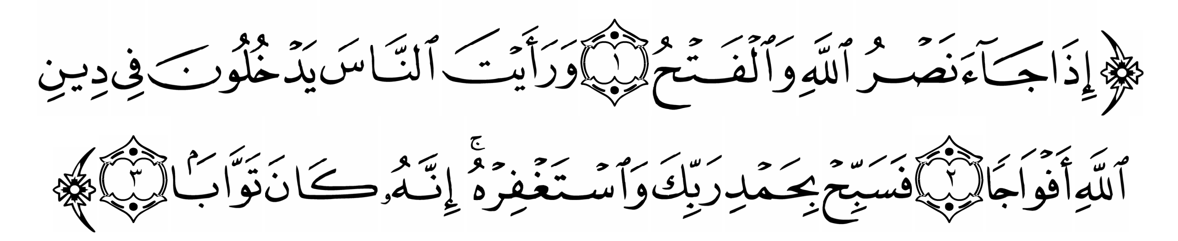
The Prophet (ﷺ) continued to do I'tikaaf during the last ten days of Ramadan, as it was reported in al-Saheehayn from 'Aa`ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), who said that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to spend the last ten days of Ramadan in I'tikaaf until he died, then his wives continued to do I'tikaaf after he died.[41]

[41] Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1921; Muslim, 1171.

During the year in which he (ﷺ) died, he spent twenty days in I'tikaaf[42], i.e., the middle ten days and the last ten days. This was for a number of reasons:

1. In that year, Jibreel reviewed the Qur`aan with him twice.[43] It was appropriate for him to spend twenty days in I'tikaaf, so that he could review the entire Qur`aan twice.

2. He (ﷺ) wanted to increase his righteous deeds and do more acts of worship, because he (ﷺ) felt that his time (of death) was near, as we may understand from the words of Allaah:



"When there comes the Help of Allaah (to you, O Muhammad against your enemies) and the Conquest (of Makkah) * And you see that the people enter Allaah's religion (Islam) in crowds. * So glorify the Praises of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness. Verily, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and Who forgives." [Surah al-Nasr (110):1-3]

So Allaah commanded His Prophet (ﷺ) to increase his Tasbeeh ("Subhaan Allaah" – Glory be to Allaah) and his Istighfaar ("Astaghfir-Allaah" – I seek the forgiveness of Allaah) towards the end of his life, and this is what he (ﷺ) did. Often, when he made Rukoo' and Sujood, he would say,

[42] Al-Bukhaari, 1939.

[43] Al-Bukhaari, 4712.

« سُبْحَانَكَ اللّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، اللّهمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي »

"Subhaanak Allaahumma wa bi hamdik, Allaahumma ighfir li."

"Glory and praise be to You, O Allaah. O Allaah, forgive me."

This was in obedience to the command in the Qur`aan.[44]

3. He (ﷺ) did that in gratitude to Allaah for the blessings that He had bestowed upon him of righteous deeds such as jihaad, teaching, fasting and qiyaam (praying at night), for the blessings of the revelation of the Qur`aan to him, raising high his fame, and other favors that Allaah had bestowed upon him.

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to enter his place of I'tikaaf before the sun set. If he wanted, for example, to spend the middle ten days of the month in I'tikaaf, he would enter his place of I'tikaaf before the sun set on the eleventh day. If he wanted to spend the last ten days in I'tikaaf, he would enter his place of I'tikaaf before the sun set on the twenty-first day.

Concerning the report in al-Saheeh that he (ﷺ) prayed Fajr and then entered his place of I'tikaaf[45], what is meant here is that he entered the special place in the mosque after Fajr prayer. He used to do I'tikaaf in a place reserved especially for that, as it was reported in Saheeh Muslim, that he used to do I'tikaaf in a Turkish tent.[46]

[44] Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 487, and Muslim, 484.

[45] Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1928; Muslim, 1173; al-Tirmidhi, 791.

[46] Narrated by Muslim, 1167.

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to put his head into 'Aa`ishah's house whilst he was in I'tikaaf in the mosque, and she should wash his hair and comb it, and she was menstruating, as was reported in al-Saheehayn.[47]

In Musnad Ahmad it was reported that he would lean into the doorway of her room, then he would put his head in, and she would comb his hair.[48]

This indicates that if a person in I'tikaaf puts part of his body – such as his foot or his head – outside of the place where he is doing I'tikaaf, there is nothing wrong with that, and if a woman who is menstruating puts her hand or foot into the mosque, there is nothing wrong with it, there is nothing wrong with that because this is not counted as entering the mosque.

Another thing that we learn from this hadeeth is that there is nothing wrong with the person in I'tikaaf keeping clean and perfuming himself, and washing and combing his hair. None of these things affect his I'tikaaf.

Another of the things that happened to the Prophet (ﷺ) in his I'tikaaf was narrated by the two shaykhs (al-Bukhaari and Muslim) from 'Aa`ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), who said:

> "When the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) wanted to go into I'tikaaf, he would pray Fajr, then go into the place where he did I'tikaaf. He commanded that a tent be put up, and it was done. Some of the other wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded that tents be put up, and this was done. When he (ﷺ) had prayed Fajr he looked and saw the tents, and said: **"Are**

[47] Al-Bukhaari, 1924, 1926; Muslim, 297.

[48] Ahmad, 6/272.

> **you seeking to do a righteous deed?"** Then he commanded that his tent should be dismantled, and he did not do I'tikaaf in that month, delaying it until the first ten days of Shawwaal.[49]

The phrase, **"Are you seeking to do a righteous deed?"** means, Is your motive for doing this the desire to do good, or is it jealousy and the desire to be close to the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ)?

It is most likely – and Allaah knows best – that his I'tikaaf in Shawwaal of that year was after the Eid, i.e., the second of Shawwaal.

It may be that it started on the day of Eid. If this is true, then it is an indication that fasting is not a condition of I'tikaaf, because there is no fasting on the day of Eid.

Something else that happened to the Prophet (ﷺ) in his I'tikaaf and was narrated by the two shaykhs (al-Bukhaari and Muslim) was that Safiyyah the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ) came and visited him during his I'tikaaf in the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan. She spoke with him for a while, then she stood up to go home. The Prophet (ﷺ) stood up with her to take her back, then when she reached the door of the mosque, by the door of Umm Salamah, two men of the Ansaar[50] passed by and greeted the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) said to them,

> **"Wait, this is Safiyyah bint Huyay."** They said, "Subhaan-Allaah, O Messenger of Allaah!" They felt distressed [that he

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[49] Al-Bukhaari, 1928; Muslim, 1173.

[50] **Ansaar:** The original inhanitants of Madeenah who accepted Islam and received the Prophet (ﷺ). (Editor)

thought they might think something bad]. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **"The Shaytaan is as close to a man as his blood."**

According to another report:

> **"(Shaytaan) flows through the veins of a man like blood,"** and, **"I was afraid that the Shaytaan might cast something into your hearts,"** and in another report, **"cast some evil into your hearts."**[51]

He (ﷺ) was keen that the two men of the Ansaar should remain steadfast in their faith, and he was afraid that the Shaytaan might plant some evil thoughts in their hearts, making them doubt the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) which would have led them to kufr, or that they might be distracted by trying to rid themselves of these insinuations, so he (ﷺ) explained the matter to them so as to remove any possible doubts or insinuating whispers. So he told them that it was Safiyyah bint Huyay (may Allaah be pleased with her), and she was his wife.

His Guidance Concerning I'tikaaf

The guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ) is the most perfect of guidance and teaching and the one of most ease. When he wanted to do I'tikaaf, he would have a bed or mattress put in the mosque for him, behind the Column of Repentance, as reported in the hadeeth from Naafi' from Ibn 'Umar from the Prophet (ﷺ):

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[51] All these reports are found in al-Bukhaari. (Editor)

"When he (ﷺ) wanted to do I'tikaaf, he would have his mattress or his bed placed behind the Column of Repentance."[52]

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to have a tent put up for him, and he would stay in it, apart from the times of prayer, so that he could be truly secluded. This was in the mosque and it is probable that the tent would be placed over his bed or mattress, as reported in the hadeeth of 'Aa`ishah (رضي الله عنها), who said:

"The Prophet (ﷺ) used to do I'tikaaf in the last ten days of Ramadan, and I used to put up a tent for him. He would pray Fajr, and then go into the tent…"[53]

He used to stay in the mosque all the time and not go out except in the case of "human need", i.e. to pass urine or stool. 'Aa`ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said:

"… he would not enter the house unless he needed to when he was in I'tikaaf."[54]

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to have his food and drink brought to him when he was in I'tikaaf, as Saalim narrated:

"His food and drink were brought to him in the place where he was doing I'tikaaf." (p.75)

He (ﷺ) used to keep clean, as he used to put his head out into 'Aa`ishah's room for her to comb his hair. According to a hadeeth narrated from 'Urwah from 'Aa`ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), she used to comb the hair of the Prophet (ﷺ)

[52] Narrated by Ibn Maajah, 1/564.

[53] Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4/810, Fat'h al-Baari.

[54] Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4/808 Fat'h al-Baari.

when he was in I'tikaaf and she was menstruating, and he was in I'tikaaf in the mosque, and she was in her room; he would lean his head towards her.[55]

Ibn Hajar said:

> "The hadeeth indicates that it is permissible to keep clean, apply perfume, wash, shave and adorn oneself, by analogy with combing. The majority agree that there is nothing makrooh (disliked) in I'tikaaf except that which is viewed as being makrooh in the mosque."[56]

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not visit the sick or attend funerals when he was in I'tikaaf, so that he could focus and devote all his attention to worshipping Allaah. According to a hadeeth narrated from 'Aa`ishah:

> **"The Prophet (ﷺ) would pass by a sick person when he was in I'tikaaf, and he would not stop and visit him (in his house) to ask him how he was."**

It was also reported from 'Urwah that she said:

> **"The Sunnah for the person who is in I'tikaaf is that he should not visit the sick or attend funerals, or touch (with desire) his wife or have intercourse with her, or go out for any but the most pressing of needs. There is no I'tikaaf except with fasting, and there is no I'tikaaf except in a Jaami' Masjid (one in which Jumu'ah is prayed)."**[57]

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[55] Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4/807 Fat'h al-Baari.

[56] Fat'h al-Baari, 4/807.

[57] Narrated by Abu Dawood, 2/333.

The wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to visit him in the place where he was doing I'tikaaf. It so happened that he came out to take one of them home, and this was for a reason, as it was night time. This was reported in the hadeeth of 'Ali ibn al-Husayn:

> "Safiyyah (may Allaah be pleased with her) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) when he was in I'tikaaf, and when she went back he walked with her. A man from among the Ansaar saw him, and when he [the Prophet (ﷺ)] saw him, he called him and said, **'Come here, this is Safiyyah.' "** Sufyaan [one of the narrators] may have said: **"This is Safiyyah; for the Shaytaan runs through the veins of the son of Adam like blood."** I [one of the narrators] said to Sufyaan, **"Did she come to him at night?"** He said, **"Could she have come at any time other than at night?"**[58]

The Prophet (ﷺ) thought that it was essential for him to go out with her (may Allaah be pleased with her) because it was night, so he went out with her from the place where he was doing I'tikaaf in order to take her home.

In conclusion therefore: the example of the Prophet (ﷺ) was characterized by striving, and he spent most of the time in the mosque, devoting himself to worshipping Allaah and seeking Laylat al-Qadr.

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[58] Al-Bukhaari. (Editor)

The Aims of I'tikaaf

1. Seeking Laylat al-Qadr.

2. Secluding oneself in worship of Allaah, may He be glorified, and keeping away from people as much as possible so that one may be entirely focused on Allaah and on remembering Him.

3. Purifying one's heart. Yet, he (ﷺ) did not let himself become disheveled at all when he devoted himself to worshipping Allaah.

4. Devoting oneself completely to pure worship, praying, making du'aa, remembering Allaah and reading the Qur`aan.

5. Protecting one's fast from everything of one's selfish desires that could affect it.

6. Reducing one's involvement in permissible worldly matters and ignoring many of them at the time when one is able to deal with them.

Different Types of I'tikaaf

Waajib (obligatory): this can only be as the result of a vow. Whoever vows to do I'tikaaf is obliged to do it. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Whoever vows to obey Allaah, let him obey Him; and whoever vows to disobey Allaah (commit a sin), let him not do that."**[59]

[59] Al-Bukhaari (Editor).

According to a hadeeth, Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) said: ‘Umar asked the Prophet (ﷺ),

“I made a vow during jaahiliyyah (before he accepted Islam) to spend one night in I’tikaaf in al-Masjid al-Haraam.’ He said, ‘Fulfillyour vow.’ ” [60]

Mandoob (recommended): This is what was the habit of the Prophet (ﷺ) when he did I’tikaaf during the last ten days of Ramadan, and he persisted in doing this. It is Sunnah Mu`akkadah[61] which is known from his life (ﷺ), as was reported in the ahaadeeth referred to when we discussed the fact that I’tikaaf is prescribed in Islam.

The Ruling on I’tikaaf

It is Sunnah Mu`akkadah, an action which the Prophet (ﷺ) always did, and he made up some of it that he missed. ‘Azzaam said concerning this:

“Al-masnoon (the Sunnah) is that which the Muslim does voluntarily to draw closer to Allaah, seeking to earn reward from Him and following the example of the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ). It was reported that he did this and persisted in it.” (p.114)

[60] Al-Bukhaari, 4/809.

[61] An emphasized Sunnah.

The Conditions of I'tikaaf

Certain conditions apply to I'tikaaf, as follows:

1. **Islam**; I'tikaaf on the part of a kaafir is not valid, as is also the case with an apostate who has left the religion.

2. **Discernment**; it is not valid on the part of a child who has not yet reached the age of discernment.

3. **Purity** (tahaarah) from major forms of impurity (janaabah – sexual impurity, Hayd – menstruation; Nifaas – post-partum bleeding). If any of these things happen to a person during his I'tikaaf, he has to leave the mosque, because it is not permissible for him to stay in the mosque in this state.

4. **It should be in the mosque**. Allaah says:

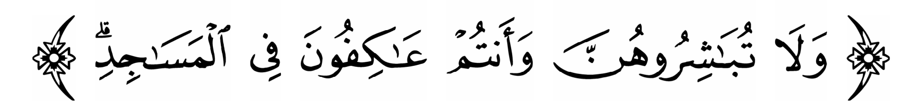


> **"And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikaaf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) in the mosques."** [Surah al-Baqarah (2):187]

It is preferable for I'tikaaf to be in a mosque where Jumu'ah (Friday) prayers are held, so that one will not have to go out of the mosque in order to attend Jumu'ah prayers.

Some scholars said that there should not be any I'tikaaf except in the three mosques: al-Masjid al-Haraam [in Makkah], al-Masjid al-Aqsaa [in al-Quds/Jerusalem] and al-Masjid al-Nabawi [in Madeenah]. The correct view is that I'tikaaf is permissible in any

mosque in which the five obligatory prayers are prayed. Allaah says:



"And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikaaf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) in the mosques." [Surah al-Baqarah (2):187]

The general phrasing found in Allah's saying, **"in the mosques"** implies that it is permissible in every mosque. It is recommended to do I'tikaaf in a Jaami' mosque (one in which Jumu'ah prayers are offered) so that the one who is doing I'tikaaf will not need to go out for Jumu'ah.

With regard to the hadeeth,

"There is no I'tikaaf except in the three mosques."[62]

…if we accept it as saheeh, it should be interpreted as meaning that the best I'tikaaf is in these mosques, as the scholars have explained.

It may be that what was meant by the words, **"There is no I'tikaaf except in the three mosques,"** is that there should be no I'tikaaf for which one makes a vow or for the purpose of which one travels. I'tikaaf is valid in all mosques. The imaams – especially the four imaams – agreed that I'tikaaf is valid in all Jaami' mosques. Nothing was transmitted to the effect that I'tikaaf is not valid unless it is in one of the three mosques from

[62] Narrated by al-Tahhaawi in "Mushkil al-Athaar", 4/20.

any well known imaam, not the four imaams nor the ten imaams, or any others. This was reported only from Hudhayfah (﵁) and one or two of the Salaf.

If a person vows to do I'tikaaf in al-Masjid al-Haraam, he has to fulfill his vow and do I'tikaaf in al-Masjid al-Haraam. But if he vows, for example, to do I'tikaaf in al-Masjid al-Nabawi, then it is permissible for him to do I'tikaaf in al-Masjid al-Nabawi or in al-Masjid al-Haraam, because al-Masjid al-Haraam is better.

If he vowed to do I'tikaaf in al-Masjid al-Aqsaa, it is permissible for him to do I'tikaaf in al-Masjid al-Aqsaa or in al-Masjid al-Haraam or in al-Masjid al-Nabawi, because they are better than al-Masjid al-Aqsaa.

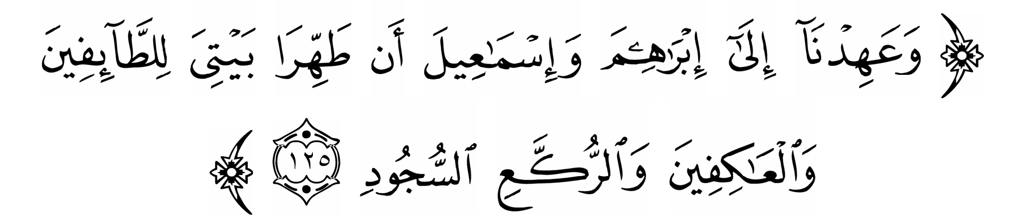
The Pillars of I'tikaaf

1. **Intention (niyyah).** 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (﵁) said: "I heard the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) say:

> **'Actions are but by intentions and every man shall have but that which he intended. So he whose migration was for Allaah and His Messenger, his migration was for Allaah and His Messenger, and he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, his migration was for that for which he intended.' "[63]**

2. **Staying in the mosque**, as it says in the aayah:

[63] Al-Bukhaari, 1/15.



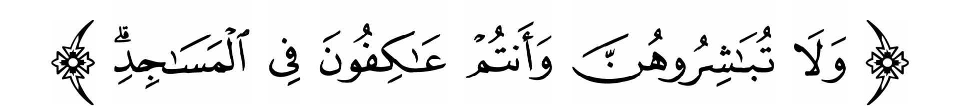
"We commanded Ibraaheem and Ismaa'eel that they should purify My House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) for those who are circumambulating it, or staying (I'tikaaf), or bowing or prostrating themselves (there, in prayer)." [Surah al-Baqarah (2):125]

This confirms that the place of I'tikaaf is the mosque. This is also indicated by the actions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and by his wives and companions after him (may Allaah be pleased with them all). And in the hadeeth from Yunus ibn Zayd that Naafi' told him from 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to do I'tikaaf in the last ten days of Ramadan, Naafi said,

" 'Abd-Allaah (رضي الله عنه) showed me the spot where the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) used to do I'tikaaf in the mosque."[64]

The Place, Time and Starting Point of I'tikaaf

The place of I'tikaaf is the mosque, as indicated in the aayah:



[64] Reported by Muslim, 8/308.

"And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikaaf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) in the mosques." [Surah al-Baqarah (2):187]

The Prophet (ﷺ) and his wives and companions (ﷺ) used to do I'tikaaf in the mosques, and it is not reported that any of them did I'tikaaf in any place other than the mosque.

The timing of I'tikaaf is during Ramadan and it is best to be done during the last ten days of the month. But it is permissible at any time during Ramadan and at other times. It is not restricted to a specific time; indeed it is mustahab (recommended) at all times, and it is obligatory if a person makes a vow committing himself to it. Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) reported that 'Umar asked the Prophet (ﷺ),

"I made a vow during the Jaahiliyyah that I would spend a night in I'tikaaf in al-Masjid al-Haraam." He said, "Fulfill your vow."[65]

The beginning of I'tikaaf is before sunset, for the person who wants to spend a day and night or longer in I'tikaaf. Some scholars said that a person should enter his place of I'tikaaf at Fajr.

The Aadaab (Etiquette) of I'tikaaf

There is a certain etiquette which is mustahab (recommended) for the person in I'tikaaf to follow so that his I'tikaaf will be acceptable. The more he adheres to this etiquette, the greater his reward

[65] Al-Bukhaari, 4/809.

from the Lord of the Worlds will be, and the less he follows it, the less his reward will be.

It is mustahab for the person in I'tikaaf to keep himself busy with prayer, reading Qur`aan, remembering Allaah (dhikr) and other kinds of pure worship. He should avoid all kinds of words and actions which will not help him to do this. He should not talk too much, because the one who talks too much, is more likely to say wrong things, and because the hadeeth says,

> **"Part of a person's being a good Muslim is that he leaves alone that which does not concern him."**[66]

He should avoid arguing, disputing, swearing and speaking in an obscene manner, for all of that is makrooh (disliked) when he is not in I'tikaaf, so it is even more makrooh when he is in I'tikaaf; he should not invalidate his I'tikaaf by doing any of these things. There is nothing wrong with his speaking when he has to, or conversing with others. The two shaykhs (al-Bukhaari and Muslim) narrated that Safiyyah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), came to visit him during his I'tikaaf in the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan. She spoke with him for a while, and then she got up to leave. The Prophet (ﷺ) stood up to go with her, and when she reached the door of the mosque, by the door of Umm Salamah, two men of the Ansaar passed by and greeted the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) said to them,

> **"Wait, this is Safiyyah bint Huyay."** They said, "Subhaan Allaah, O Messenger of Allaah!" They felt distressed (that he

66 Saheeh al Tirmidhi, p.1886. (Editor)

thought they might think something bad). The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **"The Shaytaan is as close to a man as his blood."**[67]

According to another report:

"(Shaytaan) flows through the veins of a man like blood."

"I was afraid that the Shaytaan might cast some evil ideas into your hearts."[68]

Al-Haafidh said:

"We learn a number of things from this hadeeth: It is permissible for the person who is in I'tikaaf to do permissible things such as seeing a visitor out and talking with him, and it is permissible for him to be alone and for a woman to visit him."

'Abd al-Razzaaq narrated that 'Ali said: "Whoever does I'tikaaf should not engage in obscene speech or swear; he should attend Jumu'ah and funerals, and may talk to his family if he needs to, but he should remain standing and not sit with them."

With regard to teaching Qur`aan and other (Islamic) knowledge, studying, debating with the fuqahaa´, sitting with them and writing down ahaadeeth, there is a difference of opinion among the scholars. According to Imaam Ahmad, this is not mustahab (recommended), because the Prophet (ﷺ) used to do I'tikaaf and it was not reported that he did anything except devote himself to acts of worship.

Al-Marwazi said:

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[67] Al-Bukhaari. (Editor)

[68] Both these reports were narrated by Al-Bukhaari.

> "I said to 'Abd-Allaah that a man was teaching Qur`aan to others in the mosque and he wanted to do I'tikaaf and perhaps he would complete the Qur`aan each day. He said: 'If he does that, it will be for himself, but if he sits in the mosque it will be for himself and for others; I prefer for him to teach others.' "

The view of al-Shaafi'i, as recorded in al-Mughni, was that it is mustahab (recommended) because it is the best kind of worship and its benefit is not limited to only one person.

The view of Imaam Ahmad is better, and Allaah knows best.

Notes:

1) Some people see I'tikaaf as an opportunity to be with some of their friends and spend time chatting with them. This is not good.

There is nothing wrong with a group of people doing I'tikaaf in the mosque, because the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) did I'tikaaf with him, and one of them even did I'tikaaf with him when she was experiencing Istihaadah (non-menstrual bleeding), but she was in the mosque with him.[69] So there is nothing wrong with a person doing I'tikaaf with his friend or relative, but the problem arises when I'tikaaf is regarded as an opportunity to stay up late chatting and gossiping, etc. Hence Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim, after referring to what some ignorant people do by treating I'tikaaf as an opportunity to get together and visit with one another and chat, said: "This is one thing, and the I'tikaaf of the Prophet (ﷺ) was something else altogether."[70]

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[69] Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 303, 304.

[70] Zaad al-Ma'aad.

2): Some people leave their work and neglect their obligations in order to do I'tikaaf. This is not the right attitude, because it is not right for a person to ignore something obligatory in order to do something that is Sunnah. The one who has left his work in order to do I'tikaaf has to stop his I'tikaaf and go back to work so that his earnings will be halaal. But if he can do I'tikaaf during his time off from work, or if he can make an arrangement with his boss, then this is very good.

Things which are Forbidden in I'tikaaf

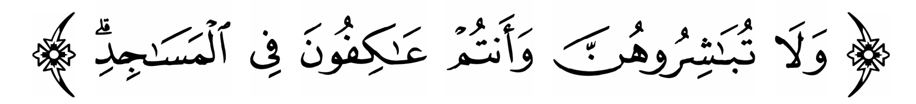
1. Leaving the mosque. I'tikaaf becomes invalid if a person goes out of the mosque for no reason, because the Messenger (ﷺ) did not go out of the mosque except in the case of "human need" i.e., to eat, if it was not possible to have food brought to him. Food used to be brought to him in the mosque, because Saalim said: **"As for his food and drink, it was brought to him where he was in his place of I'tikaaf."**

He also used to go out to purify himself from minor impurities and to do wudoo', as 'Aa`ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

> **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) used to put his head into my room whilst he was in the mosque, and I would comb his hair. He would not enter the house except in the case of need when he was in I'tikaaf."**[71]

[71] Fat'h al-Baari, 4/808.

2. Touching women with desire – including intercourse. This is something which invalidates I'tikaaf, because it is clearly sated that this is not permitted in the aayah:



"And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikaaf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) in the mosques." [Surah al-Baqarah (2):187]

3. Menstruation and post-natal bleeding. If a woman who is in I'tikaaf starts to menstruate or experiences post-natal bleeding, she has to leave the mosque so as to preserve the purity of the mosque. The same applies to anyone who is in a state of junub (impurity following sexual discharge) – until he does ghusl.

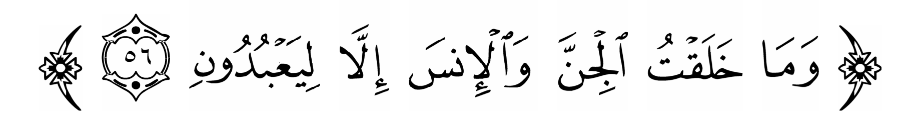
4. To complete 'iddah. If the husband of a woman who is in I'tikaaf dies and she is in the mosque, she has to leave the mosque so that she can do her 'iddah in her house.

5. Apostasy or leaving Islam. One of the conditions of I'tikaaf is Islam, so the I'tikaaf of an apostate (a person who has left Islam) is not valid.

Educational Aspects of I'tikaaf

1. Implementing the concept of worship in a complete fashion. I'tikaaf plants in the soul of the person who does it the concept of true enslavement to Allaah ('uboodiyyah), and trains him

in this important matter for which man was created. For Allaah (ﷻ) says:

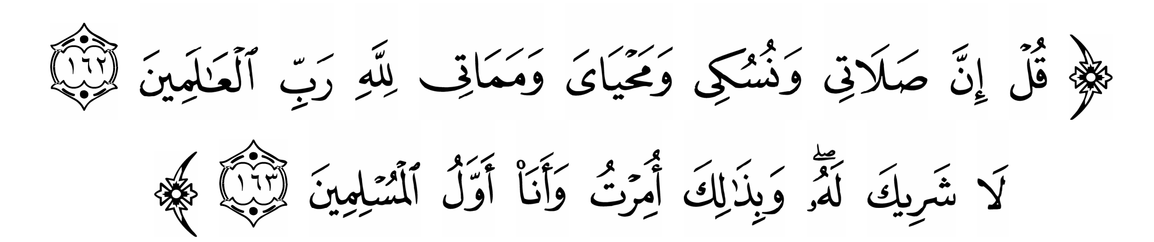


“And I (Allaah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).” [Surah al-Dhaariyaat (51):56]

The person who is in I’tikaaf has devoted his whole self and his whole time to worship Allaah, may He be glorified.

His whole purpose is to earn the pleasure of Allaah, may He be exalted, so he strives with his body, senses and time for this purpose by praying fard and nafil prayers, by making du‘aa and dhikr, by reading the Qur`aan, and doing other kinds of acts of worship.

Through this training during the best days of the month of Ramadan, the person in I’tikaaf trains himself to apply the concept of ‘uboodiyyah or enslavement to Allaah in his public and private life, and he strives to put into practice the words of the aayah:



“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Verily, my Salaat (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allaah, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists). * He has no partner. And of this I have been com-

manded, and I am the first of the Muslims.' " [Surah al-An'aam (6):162-163]

Al-Qurtubi said: **"my living"** means whatever I do in my life; **"my dying,"** means what I advise you to do after my death; **"for Allaah, the Lord of the 'Aalameen"** means they are only for the purpose of drawing closer to Him."[72]

2. Seeking Laylat al-Qadr. This was the main purpose behind the I'tikaaf of the Prophet (ﷺ). At first his I'tikaaf lasted for the entire month, then he did I'tikaaf during the middle ten days, seeking Laylat al-Qadr. When he learned that it is in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, he limited his I'tikaaf to these blessed ten days.

3. Becoming accustomed to staying in the mosque. The person in I'tikaaf has committed himself to staying in the mosque for a specific time period. Human nature may not readily accept such restrictions at the beginning of the I'tikaaf, but usually this attitude quickly disappears because of the peace of mind that the Muslim soul develops from staying in the House of Allaah.

The person in I'tikaaf understands the importance of his staying in the mosque during his I'tikaaf from the following things:

1. The person who stays in the mosque finds that the mosque becomes dear to him, and he understands the value of the houses of Allaah, may He be exalted. This love has a great value with Allaah, because those who love the houses of Allaah will be one of the groups whom Allaah will shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His shade.

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[72] Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 7/69.

2. When a person stays in the mosque, whilst he is waiting for the prayer, he is rewarded as if he is praying, and the angels pray for forgiveness for him. According to the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ), the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said:

> **"The angels will continue to pray for blessings for any one of you as long as he stays in his place of prayer and as long as nothing happens to break his wudoo′ (ablution). [They say:] 'O Allaah, forgive him, O Allaah have mercy on him,' as long as any one of you stays in his place of prayer, as long as what is keeping him there is the fact that he is waiting for the prayer, and nothing is keeping him from going back to his family apart from his prayer."**[73]

4. Keeping away from physical luxuries. In I'tikaaf a person reduces a lot of these things and becomes like a stranger in this world, so **"give good news to the stranger."** For the sake of earning the pleasure of Allaah, he is content to stay in a corner of the mosque with usually no more than a pillow on which to lay his head and a blanket with which to cover himself, for he has left his comfortable bed and his usual habits for the sake of earning Allaah's pleasure.

As for his food, this is a different story, if it is not what he usually eats. If he has food brought from his house, usually it will not be as much as he would eat at home, and he does not eat it at a table with his wife and children, as he would usually do. On the contrary, he eats like a stranger, like a poor slave who is need of his Lord. If he goes out to the market-place to get food, he tries hard to take what is available and he is not too fussy about what kind

[73] Al-Bukhaari, 2/360 Fat'h al-Baari.

of food he gets, because he has to go back to his place of I'tikaaf and not take too long to do these things. Thus he learns that he can get by with a little, for which his Lord will be pleased with him, just as he can live with much, for which his Lord will not be pleased with him – and the difference between the two is immense.

5. Giving up many harmful habits. In the light of the fact that the concept of Islamic education is lacking in many Muslim societies and in many homes in those Muslim societies, many habits have become widespread which go against the teachings of this pure religion. These evil habits have become so widespread that they have become almost acceptable and are not seen as having any harmful impact either on the religion or the individual. These habits include smoking, listening to music and watching scenes and events broadcast by satellite channels which go against the 'aqeedah (belief) of the Muslim and his sense of modesty and chastity, and other habits which affect the religion and the individual.

The time of I'tikaaf gives the individual the opportunity to see the falsehood of these habits and the futility of the belief which many Muslims have, that they do not have the ability to rid themselves of these habits, because they have gained control over them.

During the period of I'tikaaf, when he is alone with his Creator, the Muslim comes to understand the concept of worship in the most comprehensive sense and that he has to be enslaved to Allaah every hour of the day, in both his public and his private life. When he takes the pleasure and love of Allaah as the yardstick against which he measures all his actions, he will find that the habits we have referred to above and many others do not agree with that love of Allaah, and indeed they are the opposite. So he

discovers that habits such as these take him out of the circle of sincere ‘uboodiyyah towards Allaah. If this is the case, then he is obliged to rid himself of these habits as quickly as possible.

During the period of I’tikaaf, the Muslim is not allowed to go out except in the case of definite needs which serve to facilitate his staying in the mosque for I’tikaaf. Apart from that, he should not go out, even if it is for a permissible purpose. So – for example – he cannot go out and walk around in the market-place, even for a short time, to buy things that have nothing to do with his I’tikaaf. If he goes out to buy siwaak, this will not affect his I’tikaaf because it is something that is recommended before praying during his I’tikaaf. But if he went out to buy a gift for his wife or for one of his children, that would invalidate his I’tikaaf, because the Messenger (ﷺ) did not go out except in the case of “human need”, as mentioned above. So how about if the person in I’tikaaf goes out to do something haraam such as smoking cigarettes for example, or to watch a satellite TV show that he usually watches? Undoubtedly this would invalidate his I’tikaaf.

So if he goes out to drink wine or to smoke, this invalidates his I’tikaaf. In general, any going out for any invalid reason invalidates one’s I’tikaaf, and more so if the purpose of going out is to commit a sin. Even when he goes out for a legitimate purpose, it is not permissible for him to light a cigarette on the way.

I’tikaaf is an annual opportunity in which a person can get rid of these bad habits by repenting and turning to Allaah, and by weaning himself from these sins during the period of I’tikaaf, not giving in to his desires, and getting used to this.

This continual worship of Allaah requires continual patience on the part of the person in I’tikaaf, which is a kind of training for a person’s will and a kind of self-discipline for the soul which usu-

ally tries to escape this worship to turn towards other matters which it desires.

There is also the kind of patience which is required for dealing with the absence of things which a person may be used to, such as different kinds of food that he eats at home but which are not available in the mosque. So he puts up with having little for the sake of earning the pleasure of Allaah, may He be exalted and glorified.

And there is the kind of patience which is required for putting up with the place where he is sleeping, for he will not have a bed put in the mosque for him, or a comfortable mattress on which he can sleep. He sleeps on a very modest mattress or even on the carpets in the mosque.

And there is the kind of patience which is required for putting up with the conditions in the mosque, the crowds of people around him, the lack of peace and quiet such as he enjoys at home when he wants to sleep.

And there is the kind of patience which is required for suppressing his desire for his wife, with whom he is not allowed to have sexual relations if he goes home for any purpose; he cannot even kiss her or hug her, even though she is ordinarily halaal (permissible) for him. Thus the value of patience, strong will power and self-control is manifested. Through these practices and others, a person can train himself to delay many of the things he desires for the sake of things which are more important, so he puts off these psychological and material needs for the sake of earning the pleasure of Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted.

6. Peace of mind.

7. Reading the Qur`aan and completing it.

8. Sincere repentance.

9. Qiyaam al-Layl (praying at night) and becoming accustomed to doing so.

10. Making good use of one's time.

11. Purifying one's soul.

12. Reforming one's heart and focusing on Allaah.

We ask Allaah to help us to remember Him, thank Him and worship Him properly. And Allaah knows best. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

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Zakaat al-Fitr

by:

Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid

Definition

Zakaat al-Fitr is a kind of charity (sadaqah) that is obligatory at the conclusion of the fast of Ramadan. The word zakaat is connected by idaafah (genitive structure in Arabic grammar) to fitr[1] because the occasion of concluding the fast is the reason why this zakaat becomes obligatory.

Why Zakaat al-Fitr has been Legislated

Ibn 'Abbaas said:

> **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) made Zakaat al-Fitr obligatory as a means of purifying the fasting person from idle talk and foul language, and to feed the poor. Whoever pays it before the prayer, it is an accepted zakaat, and whoever pays it after the prayer, it is just a kind of charity (sadaqah)."** [2]

"Purifying" means purifying the soul of the one who has fasted Ramadan. With regard to the word **"foul language"**, Ibn al-Atheer said:

> "**'Foul language'** refers to obscene speech. **'Feeding [the poor]'** refers to food that is edible. **'Whoever pays it before**

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[1] **Fitr** is derived from the three letter root: f-t-r, which literally means to break one's fast, whether it be the fast of Ramadan, or the meal (breakfast: note the two original words in English are also break and fast) which one eats in the morning after having not eaten while sleeping. (Editor)

[2] Reported by Abu Dawood, 1371. Al-Nawawi said: "Abu Dawood reported it from Ibn 'Abbaas with a hasan isnaad".

the prayer' means before Salaat al-'Eid. **'It is an accepted zakaat'** – here zakaat means sadaqat al-fitr. **'Just a kind of charity'** means a kind of charity that could be given at any time."[3]

It was said that this is what was meant by the aayah in Surah al-A'laa:



"But those will prosper who purify themselves, and glorify the name of their Guardian-Lord, and (lift their hearts) in Prayer." [Surah al-A'laa (87):14-15]

It was reported that 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez and Abu'l-'Aaliyah said:

"He [the Prophet (ﷺ)] paid Zakaat al-Fitr then he went out for the prayer – i.e., Salaat al-'Eid."[4]

Wakee' ibn al-Jarraah said:

"Zakaat al-Fitr at the end of the month of Ramadan is like two sajdahs of sahw (forgetfulness) for the prayer. It makes up for any shortcomings in the fast as the prostrations make up for any shortcomings in the prayer."[5]

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[3] 'Awn al-Ma'bood Sharh Abi Dawood.

[4] Al-Jassaas, Ahkaam al-Qur`aan, part 3, Soorat al-A'laa ilaaha ill-Allah.

[5] Al-Nawawi, al-Majmoo', part 6.

Ruling on Zakaat al-Fitr

The correct view is that it is fard (obligatory), because Ibn 'Umar said: **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) made Zakaat al-Fitr obligatory,"** and because of the consensus of the scholars (ijmaa') that it is fard.[6]

When it must be Given

It becomes obligatory when the sun sets on the last day of Ramadan. Anyone who gets married, has a baby born to him or becomes Muslim before the sun sets on that day, has to give Zakaat al-Fitr [on behalf of himself and/or his new wife or new baby], but if that happens after sunset, he does not have to give it… Whoever dies after sunset on the night of fitr, sadaqat al-fitr must be given on his behalf. This is what Ahmad stated."[7]

Who must pay it

1. Zakaat al-Fitr is obligatory on every Muslim. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said:

[6] Al-Mughni, part 2, Baab Sadaqat al-Fitr.

[7] Al-Mughni, part 2, Fasl Waqt Wujoob Zakaat al-Fitr.

“The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) made Zakaat al-Fitr, one saa’ of dates or one saa’ of barley, obligatory on the Muslims, slave and free, male and female, young and old.”[8]

2. Al-Shaafi‘i (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

“The hadeeth of Naafi’ indicates that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) made it obligatory only on the Muslims, which is in accordance with the Book of Allaah, may He be glorified, because He has made zakaat as a purification for the Muslims, and purification can only be for the Muslims.”[9]

3. It is obligatory on those who are able to pay it. Al-Shaafi‘i said:

“Everyone who, at the beginning of Shawwaal, has enough food for himself and those whom he is supporting for that day and has enough to give Zakaat al-Fitr on behalf of them and himself should give it on behalf of them and himself. If he only has enough to give on behalf of some of them, then he should give on behalf of some of them. If he only has enough for himself and those whom he is supporting, then he is not obliged to give Zakaat al-Fitr on his own behalf or on behalf of those whom he is supporting.”[10]

4. Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

“The one who is in financial difficulty is not obliged to give [Zakaat al-Fitr]; there is no difference among the scholars in this regard… The obligation is determined by whether or not a person can afford it. Whoever has one saa’ more than he needs for himself and those whom he is obliged to support on the night

[8] Al-Bukhaari, 1407.

[9] Al-Umm, part 2, Baab Zakaat al-Fitr.

[10] Al-Umm, part 2, Baab Zakaat al-Fitr.

> and day of ‘Eid has enough [is not in financial difficulty]. Whoever does not have anything more than he needs is in financial difficulty, so he is not obliged to pay anything in this case.[11]

5. The Muslim should give on his own behalf and on behalf of those on whom he spends, such as wives and relatives, if they cannot give it on their own behalf. If they are able to, it is better for them to give it themselves, because the command is addressed to them in the first place. Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: **“The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) made Zakaat al-Fitr, one saa’ of dates or one saa’ of barley, obligatory on the Muslims, slave and free, male and female, young and old, and commanded that it should be given before the people went out to pray.”**

Al-Shaafi‘i (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

> “The guardian of the insane and the minor should give Zakaat al-Fitr on their behalf and on behalf of those for whom they [the insane and minor] may be responsible, just as the sane person should give on his own behalf… If there is a kaafir among those whom he is supporting, he does not have to give Zakaat al-Fitr on his behalf, because he cannot be purified by zakaah.”[12]

The author of al-Muhadhdhab said:

> “The author (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: ‘If someone has to pay Zakaat al-Fitr on his own behalf and on behalf of those whom he is supporting, if they are Muslim and if has more than he needs to spend on them that he can give, then the mother and father, and grandparents and great-grandparents, etc., may have to pay Zakaat al-Fitr on behalf of their children

[11] Al-Majmoo’, part 6, Shuroot Wujoob Sadaqat al-Fitr.

[12] Al-Umm, part 2, Baab Zakaat al-Fitr.

> and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, etc., and the children may have to pay Zakaat al-Fitr on behalf of their parents and grandparents and great-grandparents, etc., – if they are obliged to spend on their maintenance.' "[13]

A man has to pay on behalf of himself and his wife – even if she has money of her own – and his children and parents if they are poor, and his daughter if she is married but the marriage has not yet been consummated. If his son is rich, he does not have to give Zakaat al-Fitr on his behalf. A husband has to giveZakaat al - Fitr on behalf of a divorced wife whose divorce (talaaq) is not yet final (i.e., she is still in the 'iddah of a first or second talaaq), but not in the case of a rebellious wife or one whose divorce is final. A son does not have to give Zakaat al-Fitr on behalf of a poor father's wife because he is not obliged to spend on her.

[When giving Zakaat al-Fitr], one should start with the closest people first, so he gives it on behalf of himself, then his wife, then his children, then the rest of his relatives in order of closeness, following the pattern laid out in the rules governing inheritance.

Al-Shaafi'i, may Allaah have mercy on him, said:

> "Who I say is obliged to give Zakaat al-Fitr, if a child is born to him, or he takes possession of a slave, or someone becomes one of his dependents at any time during the last day of Ramadan, then the suns sets on the night of the crescent of Shawwaal, he has to give Zakaat al-Fitr on that person's behalf."[14]

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[13] Al-Majmoo', part 6.

[14] Al-Umm, Baab Zakaat al-Fitr al-Thaani.

It is not obligatory to give Zakaat al-Fitr on behalf of a fetus that is still in the mother's womb, but if this is done voluntarily, there is nothing wrong with it.

If someone who is obliged to give Zakaat al-Fitr dies before giving it, it must be given from his inheritance… even if the person who was supporting him also dies, the obligation still stands.[15]

If a servant has set wages that are paid to him daily or monthly, the employer does not have to give Zakaat al-Fitr on his behalf, because he is a hired worker, and one is not obliged to spend on a hired worker.[16]

Concerning giving Zakaat al-Fitr on behalf of an orphan, Imaam Maalik (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "The guardian should give Zakaat al-Fitr on behalf of the orphans some of whose wealth is under his control, even if they are minors."[17]

Amount of Zakaat al-Fitr

The amount to be given is one saa' of food, according to the measure of saa' used by the Prophet (ﷺ), because of the following hadeeth.

[15] Al-Mughni, part 2.

[16] Al-Mawsoo'ah, 23/339.

[17] Al-Mudawwanah, part 1.

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (ﷺ) said: "At the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) we used to give it in the form of a saa' of food…"[18]

The weight of the saa' [which is a measure of volume] varies according to the type of food concerned, so when giving Zakaat al-Fitr by weight, one must make sure that what is given is equivalent to a saa' of that type of food. A saa' is approximately equivalent to three kilograms of rice.

Types of Things that may be Given

What should be given is food for human consumption, such as dates, wheat, rice or other kinds of food that humans eat. It is reported in al-Saheehayn from Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) made Zakaat al-Fitr, one saa' of dates or one saa' of barley, obligatory on the Muslims, slave and free, male and female. (At that time, barley was one of the foods they ate).[19] Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (ﷺ) said:

"At the time of the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ), we used to give a saa' of food on the day of Fitr." Abu Sa'eed said: **"And our food was barley, raisins, aqit (dried yoghurt) and dates."**[20]

It should be given in the form of the staple food that is used locally, whether it is wheat, rice, dates or lentils…

[18] Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1412.

[19] Al-Bukhaari, 1408.

[20] Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1408.

Al-Shaafi'i (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

"If the staple food of a people is corn, pearl millet (dukhn), thin-husked barley (sult), rice or any grain on which zakaat is obligatory, then they may give it as Zakaat al-Fitr."[21]

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

"Our companions (fellow scholars of the Shaafi'i madh-hab) said: 'It is a condition of giving something as Zakaat al-Fitr that it should be one of the foodstuffs on which zakaat is paid at the rate of one-tenth (i.e., zakaah of grains and fruits). Nothing else is acceptable except aqit (dried yoghurt), cheese and milk.' "

Al-Maawardi said:

"This is the case even though some of the people who live on islands and others have fish or eggs as their staple food; these are not acceptable (as Zakaat al-Fitr) and there is no difference (among the scholars concerning this). As regards meat, the correct view is that stated by al-Shaafi'i and confirmed by al-Musannaf and the companions in all that was narrated from them: that it is not acceptable (as Zakaat al-Fitr), and this is the unanimous view (of the scholars)… Our companions said: 'This is the case even if their staple food is fruits on which they do not have to give one-tenth as zakaat, such as figs etc. These are not acceptable (as Zakaat al-Fitr) at all."[22]

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

"If it was said, 'You must give a saa' of dates everywhere, whether it is the staple food or not,' this is a disputed matter

[21] Al-Shaafi'i, al-Umm, part 2, Baab al-Rajul Yakhtalifu Qootuhu.

[22] Al-Majmoo', part 6: al-Waajib fi Zakaat al-Fitr.

which is subject to ijtihaad. There are some people who say that it is obligatory, and others who say that in each country it is obligatory to give a saa' of whatever is the staple food there, as the Prophet (ﷺ) specified five types of food for Zakaat al-Fitr, so in each country they can give the equivalent of a saa' of their staple food. This is more correct, and is closer to the principles of sharee'ah, for how can you make it obligatory for people whose staple food is fish, for example, or rice or pearl millet, to give dates? … And Allaah is the Source of strength.[23]

It is permissible to give pasta ("macaroni") that is made from wheat, but one must make certain that the weight is equivalent to the weight of a saa' of wheat.

As for giving Zakaat al-Fitr in the form of money, this is not permissible at all, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said that it must be given in the form of food, not money. He clearly stated that it is to be given in the form of food, so it is not permissible to give it in any other form and Islam wants it to be given openly, not secretly. The Sahaabah gave Zakaat al-Fitr in the form of food, and we should follow, not innovate. The giving of Zakaat al-Fitr in the form of food is regulated by the measure of saa', and if it were to be given in the form of money, it could not be regulated in this manner: according to the price of what would it be worked out and given? There are obvious benefits to giving it in the form of staple foods, such as at times when businessmen are hoarding certain goods, prices have gone up, or at times of war and inflation. If someone were to say, "But money is more useful for the poor, because then they can buy what they want, and they might need something other than food, so the poor person might sell

[23] I'laam al-Muwaqqa'een, part 2, al-Qiyaas.

the food and lose money." The response to this is that there are other sources for meeting the needs of the poor with regard to shelter, clothing and so on, which are provided for from the zakaat paid on people's wealth (zakaat al-maal), general charity and other kinds of donations. Let us put things into the proper Islamic perspective and adhere to what was set out by the Prophet (ﷺ), who told us that giving a saa' of food to feed the poor is obligatory. If we give food to a poor person, he will eat it and will benefit from it sooner or later, because it is the kind of food he uses anyway.

On this basis, it is not permissible for the purposes of Zakaat al-Fitr to give money for a person to pay off his debts or to cover the cost of surgery for a sick person or to pay for tuition for a needy student and so on. There are other sources for this kind of help, as stated above.

The Time for givingZakaat al -Fitr

It should be given before the Eid prayer, as is stated in the hadeeth that the Prophet (ﷺ),

> **"…commanded that it should be given before the people went out to pray."**[24]

There is a time when it is mustahab (recommended) to give it and a time when it is permissible to give it.

The time when it is mustahab to give it is on the day of Eid, because of the hadeeth quoted above. For this reason it is Sunnah

[24] Al-Bukhaari, 1407.

to delay the Eid prayer on Eid al-Fitr so as to allow enough time for those who have to give Zakaat al-Fitr to do so, and to have breakfast before coming out. On the other hand, it is Sunnah to hasten the Eid prayers on Eid al-Ad'haa so that the people can go and offer their sacrifices and eat from them.

The time when it is permissible to give Zakaat al-Fitr is one or two days before Eid. In Saheeh al-Bukhaari it is reported that Naafi' said:

> **"Ibn 'Umar used to give on behalf of the young and the old, and he even used to give on behalf of my sons. He would give to those who took it, and it would be given a day or two before (Eid) al-Fitr."**

("Those who took it" refers to those who were appointed by the imaam to collect the sadaqat al-fitr).

Naafi' said:

> **"Ibn 'Umar used to send Zakaat al-Fitr to the one who was collecting it two or three days before ('Eid) al-Fitr."**[25]

It is disliked (makrooh) to delay giving it until after Salaat al-'Eid; some scholars said that this is haraam and is counted as qadaa´ (making up a duty that has not been performed on time), on the basis of the hadeeth,

> **"Whoever pays it before the prayer, it is an accepted zakaat, and whoever pays it after the prayer, it is just a kind of charity."**[26]

[25] Al-Mudawwanah, part 1, Baab Ta'jeel al-Zakaah qabla huloolihaa.

[26] Reported by Abu Dawood, 1371.

It says in ‘Awn al-Ma’bood Sharh Abi Dawud:

> “Obviously, the one who gives Zakaat al-Fitr after the prayer is like one who did not give it, because they have in common the fact that they did not give this obligatory charity. Most of the scholars think that giving it before Salaat al-‘Eid is only mustahab, and they confirmed that it is acceptable to give it at any time until the end of the day of Fitr, but this opinion is refuted by the hadeeth. With regard to delaying it until after the day of Eid, Ibn Raslaan said: “This is haraam by consensus, because it is zakaah, so the one who delays it must be committing a sin, as is the case when one delays a prayer.”

So it is haraam to delay giving it for no good reason, because this defeats the purpose, which is to save the poor from having to ask on the day of joy. If a person delays giving it with no excuse, he has committed a sin but he still has to make it up.

Zakaat al-Fitr has to be handed over to someone who is entitled to it or someone who has been appointed to collect it, at the right time before the Eid prayer. If a man wants to give it to a particular person but cannot find him or a trustee who can accept it on his behalf and he is afraid that time is running out, he has to give it to another entitled person and not delay giving it. If a person wants to give his Zakaat al-Fitr to a specific needy person and is afraid that he may not see him at the appropriate time, he should tell him to appoint someone to accept it on his behalf or to appoint him (the giver) to take it from himself on his behalf. Then when the time comes, he can take it to him in a bag or whatever or keep it for him as a trust until he sees him.

If the one who wants to give zakaat appoints someone else to give it on his behalf, he is still responsible for it until he is certain that his deputy has carried out his instructions.[27]

To Whom it may be Given

Zakaat al-Fitr may be given to the eight categories of people to whom zakaat al-maal (zakaat of wealth)may be given. This is the opinion of the majority. According to the Maalikis, one of the opinions of Ahmad and the opinion of Ibn Taymiyyah, it should be given exclusively to the poor and needy.

1. Al-Shaafi'i said:

> "Zakaat al-Fitr should be divided among those among whom zakaat al-maal is divided, and it should not be spent anywhere else… It should be shared out among the poor and needy, slaves who have made a contract to purchase their freedom from their masters, debtors, those who are fighting in the way of Allaah, and wayfarers.[28]

2. Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, after quoting the hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbaas (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to Mu'aadh (ﷺ):

> **"Tell them that they have to give sadaqah (charity) that is to be taken from their wealth and given to the poor."**

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[27] Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan: Ahkaam Zakaat al-Fitr, by Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen.

[28] Al-Umm: Baab Day'ah Zakaat al-Fitr qabla Qasmihaa.

"It is not permissible to give any part of zakaah to a kaafir, whether it is Zakaat al-Fitr or zakaat al-maal… Maalik, al-Layth, Ahmad and Abu Thawr said: 'They (i.e., kaafirs) should not be given it.'"

Zakaah should be given to the poor, those who have overwhelming debts, and those whose salaries are not enough to last until the end of the month, in accordance with the level of their needs.

It is not permissible for the one who gives Zakaat al-Fitr to buy it back from the one to whom he has given it.[29]

Payment and Distribution

1. It is preferable for the person who is giving to share it out himself. (Al-Shaafi'i said): "I prefer to share out Zakaat al-Fitr myself rather than give it to the one who is collecting it."

2. Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "Al-Shaafi'i said in al-Mukhtasar:

'Zakaat al-Fitr is to be shared out among those to whom zakaat al-maal is shared out. I prefer that it should be given to relatives on whom it is not obligatory to spend at all.' He said: 'If he prefers to give it to the one who is collecting it, this should be fine, in shaa Allaah… but it is better for him to share it out himself… If he gives it to the Muslim leader or the collector or the one who is collecting the people's Zakaat al-Fitr, and he is given

[29] Fataawaa al-Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen.

permission to give it, this is fine, but sharing it out himself is better than all of this.' "[30]

3. It is permissible to appoint a trustworthy person to hand it over to those who are entitled to it, but if he is not trustworthy, then it is not allowed. 'Abd-Allaah ibn al-Mu'ammal said:

"I heard Ibn Abi Mulaykah when a man was saying to him, 'so-and-so told me to leave my Zakaat al-Fitr in the mosque,' Ibn Abi Mulaykah said, 'He does not know what he is talking about. You go and share it out (yourself), otherwise Ibn Hishaam (the governor who was collecting it in the mosque) will give it to his guards and whoever he wants' (i.e., he would give it to people who were not entitled to it)."[31]

Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) stated that it is permissible to share out one saa' among a group of people, or to give many saa's to one person.

Maalik said: "There is nothing wrong with a man giving sadaqat al-fitr on behalf of himself and his family to one needy person."[32]

If one is giving less than a saa' to a poor person, this must be pointed out, because he might use it to pay his own Zakaat al-Fitr.

It is permissible for a poor person, if he receives Zakaat al-Fitrah from someone and he has more than he needs, to give it on his own behalf or on behalf of one of those who are dependent on him if he is sure that the food is acceptable(i.e., it is the right type of food and the quantity is sufficient).

[30] Al-Majmoo', part 6.

[31] Al-Umm: Baab day'at Zakaat al-Fitr qabla Qasmihaa.

[32] Al-Mudawwanah, part 1, Baab fi Qasm Zakaat al-Fitr.

Where to give Zakaat al-Fitr

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "As for Zakaat al-Fitr, it should be shared out in the country in which it became obligatory, whether a person has wealth there or not, because it is the reason why the zakaat became obligatory…"[33]

It was reported in al-Mudawwanah Fiqh al-Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him):

> "I said: What is the opinion of Maalik on someone who comes from Ifreeqiyah ('Africa') and is in Egypt on the day of Fitr – where should he give his Zakaat al-Fitr? Malik said: [He should give it] where he is. Maalik said: If his family in Ifreeqiyah give it on his behalf, that is fine. (What was meant by Ifreeqiyah/'Africa' in those days is different from what it means now)."[34]

We ask Allaah to accept the worship of all of us and to join us with the righteous. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and all his family and companions.

[33] Al-Mughni, part 2, Fasl idhaa kaana al-muzakki fi balad wa maaluhu fi balad.

[34] Part 1, Baab fi Ikhraaj al-Musaafir Zakaat al-Fitr.

Eid

Etiquette and Rulings

by:

Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid

Praise be to Allaah, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon all his family and companions.

"Eid" is an Arabic word referring to something habitual that returns and is repeated. Eids or festivals are symbols to be found in every nation, including those that are based on revealed scriptures and those that are idolatrous, as well as others, because celebrating festivals is something that is an instinctive part of human nature. All people like to have special occasions to celebrate, where they can come together and express their joy and happiness.

The festivals of the kaafir (non-Muslim) nations may be connected to worldly matters, such as the beginning of the year, the start of an agricultural season, the changing of the weather, the establishment of a state, the accession of a ruler, and so on. They may also be connected to religious occasions, like many of the festivals belonging exclusively to the Jews and Christians, such as the Thursday on which they claim the table was sent down to Jesus, Christmas, New Year's, Thanksgiving, and holidays on which gifts are exchanged. These are celebrated in all European and North American countries nowadays, and in other countries where Christian influence is prevalent, even if the country is not originally Christian. Some so-called Muslims may also join in these holidays, out of ignorance or hypocrisy.

The Magians (Zoroastrians) also have their own festivals, such as Mahrajaan, Nowruz and so on.

The Baatinis[1] have their own festivals too, such as "Eid al-Ghadeer", when they claim that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave the khilaafah to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and to the twelve imaams after him.

Muslims are Distinguished by their Festivals

The Prophet's words,

"Every nation has its festival, and this is your festival."[2]

…indicate that these two Eids are exclusively for the Muslims, and that it is not permissible for Muslims to imitate the kuffaar and mushrikeen in anything that is a distinctive part of their celebrations, whether it be food, dress, bonfires or acts of worship. Muslim children should not be allowed to join in on these kaafir festivals, to put up decorations, or to join in with the kuffaar on these occasions. All kaafir or innovated festivals are haraam, such as Independence Day celebrations, anniversaries of revolutions, holidays celebrating trees or accessions to the throne, birthdays, Labor Day, the Nile festival, Shimm al-Naseem (Egyptian spring holiday), teachers' day, and al-Mawlood al-Nabawi (Prophet's Birthday).

The Muslims have no festivals apart from Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Ad'haa, because of the hadeeth narrated from Anas (رضي الله عنه) who said:

[1] **Baatini:** A general term for any group whose faith is based upon the the belief that the Qur`aan has an "inner" meaning only understandable by a select few.Here it seems the author is referring to the Shi'ahs. (Editor)

[2] Al-Bukhaari and Muslim.

“The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) came to Madeenah and the people had two days when they would play and have fun. He said, ‘What are these two days?’ They said, ‘We used to play and have fun on these days during the Jaahiliyyah. The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said, ‘Allaah has given you something better than them, the day of Ad’haa and the day of Fitr.’ ”[3]

These two Eids are among the signs or symbols of Allaah which we must celebrate and understand the aims and meanings behind them.

Below we find a discussion of some of the rulings and manners of the two Eids according to Islamic sharee‘ah

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[3] Sunan Abi Dawood, 1134.

1 – Ahkaam al-Eid (Rulings on Eid)

Fasting

It is haraam to fast on the days of Eid because of the hadeeth of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (ﷺ), who said that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) forbade fasting on the day of Fitr and the day of Sacrifice (Ad'haa).[4]

Ruling on the Eid Prayers

Some of the scholars say that Eid prayers are waajib (obligatory) – this is the view of the Hanafi scholars and of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him). They say that the Prophet (ﷺ) always prayed the Eid prayer and never omitted to do it, not even once. They take as evidence the aayah,



"Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only)." [Surah al-Kawthar 108:2]

…i.e. the Eid prayer and the sacrifice after it, which is an instruction, the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered that the women should be brought out to attend the Eid prayers, and that a

[4] Reported by Muslim, 827.

woman who did not have a jilbaab should borrow one from her sister. Some scholars say that Eid prayer is fard kifaayah[5]. This is the view of the Hanbalis. A third group say that Eid prayer is Sunnah mu`akkadah. This is the view of the Maalikis and Shaafi'is. They take as evidence the hadeeth of the Bedouin which says that Allaah has not imposed any prayers on His slaves other than the five daily prayers. So the Muslim should be keen to attend Eid prayers, especially since the opinion that it is waajib is based on strong evidence. The goodness, blessings and great reward one gets from attending Eid prayers, and the fact that one is following the example of the Prophet (ﷺ) by doing so, should be sufficient motivation.

Essentials and Timing of Eid Prayer

Some scholars (the Hanafis and Hanbalis) say that the conditions of Eid prayer are that the iqaamah should be recited and the prayer should be offered in jamaa'ah (congregation). Some of them said that the conditions of Eid prayer are the same as the conditions for Friday prayer, with the exception of the khutbah, attendance at which is not obligatory. The majority of scholars say that the time for the Eid prayer starts when the sun has risen above the height of a spear, as seen by the naked eye, and continues until the sun is approaching its zenith.

[5] **Fard kifaayah:** Communal Obligation. Only if a sufficient number of individuals perform the task are others absolved from the sin of leaving it. (Editor)

Description of the Eid Prayer

'Umar (ﷺ) said:

> **"The prayer of Eid and al-Ad'haa consists of two complete rak'ahs, not shortened. This is according to the words of your Prophet, and the liar is doomed."**[6]

Abu Sa'eed said:

> **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) used to come out to the prayer-place on the day of Fitr and al-Ad'haa, and the first thing he would do was the prayer."**[7]

The Takbeer is repeated seven times in the first rak'ah and five times in the second, the Qur`aan is to be recited after each.

It was reported from 'Aa`ishah that the Takbeer of al-Fitr and al-Ad'haa is seven in the first rak'ah and five in the second, apart from the takbeer of rukoo'.[8]

If a person joining the prayer catches up with the imaam during these extra takbeeraat, he should say "Allaahu akbar" with the imaam, and he does not have to make up any takbeeraat he may have missed, because they are Sunnah, not waajib. With regard to what should be said between the takbeeraat, Hammaad ibn Salamah reported from Ibraaheem that Waleed ibn 'Uqbah entered the mosque when Ibn Mas'ood, Hudhayfah and Abu Musa were there, and said, "Eid is here, what should I do?" Ibn Mas'ood said:

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[6] Irwaa´ al-Ghaleel, declared authentic by al-Albani. (Editor)

[7] Al-Bukhaari. (Editor)

[8] Reported by Abu Dawood; saheeh by the sum of its isnaads.

"Say 'Allaahu akbar', praise and thank Allaah, send blessings on the Prophet (ﷺ) and make du'aa, then say 'Allaahu akbar', praise and thank Allaah, send blessings on the Prophet (ﷺ)…etc."[9]

Recitation of Qur`aan in Eid Prayers

It is recommended (mustahab) that in the Eid prayers the imaam should recite **"Qaaf"** [Surah 50] and **"Iqtarabat al-saa'ah"** [al-Qamar, Surah 54], as it is reported in Saheeh Muslim that 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab asked Abu Waaqid al-Laythi,

"What would the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) recite at [Eid] al-Ad'haa and al-Fitr?" He said, "He used to recite 'Qaaf. Wa'l-Qur`aan al-majeed' [Surah Qaaf (50)] and 'Iqtarabat al-saa'ah wanshaqq al-qamar' [Surah al-Qamar (54)]."

Most of the reports indicate that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite Surah al-A'laa [87] and Surah al-Ghaashiyah [88], as he used to recite them in the Friday prayer. Al-Nu'maan ibn Basheer said:

"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) used to recite on the two Eids and on Fridays, 'Sabbih isma rabbika'l-a'laa' [Surah al-A'laa (87)] and 'Hal ataaka hadeeth ul-ghaashiyah' [Surah al Ghaashiyah (88)]."[10]

Samurah (رضي الله عنه) said:

[9] Reported by al-Tabaraani. It is a saheeh hadeeth that is quoted in al-Irwaa´ and elsewhere.

[10] Saheeh Muslim, 878.

“The Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite on the two Eids, ‘Sabbih isma rabbika’l-a’laa’ [Surah al-A’laa (87)] and ‘Hal ata-aka hadeeth ul-ghaashiyah’ [Surah al-Ghaashiyah (88)].”[11]

The Prayer comes before the Khutbah

One of the rulings of Eid is that the prayer should come before the khutbah, as is reported in Musnad Ahmad from the hadeeth of Ibn ‘Abbaas, who testified that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) prayed before the khutbah on Eid, then he gave the khutbah.[12]

Another indication that the khutbah should be after the prayer is the hadeeth of Abu Sa‘eed (رضي الله عنه):

“The Prophet (ﷺ) used to go out to the prayer-place on the day of al-Fitr and al-Ad’haa, and the first thing he would do was to pray. He would then stand up facing the people whilst they were still sitting in their rows, and would advise and instruct them. If he wanted to send out a military expedition, he would decide about the matter then, or if he wanted to issue a command, he would do it then.” Abu Sa‘eed said: “This is what the people continued to do until I came out [to the Eid prayers] with Marwaan when he was the governor of Madeenah on either Ad’haa or Fitr. When we reached the prayer-place, we saw the minbar which had been built by Katheer ibn

[11] Reported by Ahmad and others; it is saheeh. Al-Irwaa´, 3/116.

[12] Musnad Ahmad, 1905. The hadeeth is also in al-Saheehayn.

al-Salt. Marwaan wanted to get on the minbar before the prayer. I pulled on his cloak, and he pulled on mine in return, then he got on the minbar and gave the khutbah before the prayer. I said, 'You have changed it, by Allaah!' He said, 'O Abu Sa'eed, what you know is gone.' I said, 'What I know, by Allaah, is better than what I do not know.' He said, 'The people will not remain sitting after the prayer, so we made it [the khutbah] before the prayer.' "[13]

Anyone who wants to leave during the khutbah is allowed to do so.[14] 'Abd-Allaah ibn al-Saa`ib said:

"I attended Eid with the Prophet (ﷺ), and when he finished the prayer, he said: "We will give the khutbah, so whoever wants to sit (and listen to) the khutbah, let him sit, and whoever wants to leave, let him go.' "[15]

Not Delaying the Prayer

'Abd-Allaah ibn Bishr, the companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), went out with the people on the day of Fitr or al-Ad'haa and objected to the fact that the imaam came very late. He said,

13 Reported by al-Bukhaari, 956.

14 Indeed what we see these days is a great evil, in that people leave during the khutbah whilst speaking and hugging each other on the way. Many even linger about chatting with others while the Imaam is delivering the khutbah. Those who choose to leave during the khutbah must do so in a calm and quiet manner, so not as to disturb those listening. (Editor)

15 Irwaa´ al-Ghaleel, 3/96.

"At the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) we would have finished by now,"

…and that was at the time of al-Tasbeeh.[16]

Nafil Prayers in the Prayer-Place

There are no nafil prayers to be done either before or after the Eid prayer, as Ibn 'Abbaas reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to come out on the day of Eid and pray two rak'ahs, with nothing before or after them.

This is the case if the prayer is offered in a prayer place or public place. If, however, the people pray the Eid prayer in a mosque, then they should pray two rak'ahs for Tahiyat al-Masjid ("greeting the mosque") before sitting down.

Not Knowing about Eid until the Next Day

Abu 'Umayr ibn Anas reported from his paternal uncles among the Ansaar who said:

> **"It was cloudy and we could not see the new moon of Shawwaal, so we started the day fasting, then a caravan cameat the end of the day and told the Messenger of A l-laah (ﷺ) that they had seen the new moon of Shawwaal the day before, so he told the people to stop fasting, and they went out to pray the Eid prayer the next day."**[17]

[16] Reported by al-Bukhaari in a 'mu'allaq majzoom' hadeeth.

[17] Reported by the five. It is saheeh; al-Irwaa´, 3/102.

If someone misses the Eid prayer, the most correct view is that he may make it up by praying two rak'ahs.

Women's Attendance at Eid Prayers

Hafsah said:

> **"We used to prevent prepubescent girls from attending Eid prayers. Then a woman came and stayed at the fort of Banu Khalaf and told us about her sister. Her sister's husband had taken part in twelve campaigns with the Prophet (ﷺ) and [she said], 'My sister was with him on six of them.' She said, 'We used to treat the wounded and take care of the sick. My sister asked the Prophet (ﷺ) whether there was anything wrong with her not going out [on Eid] if she did not have a jilbaab. He said, 'Let her friend give her one of her jilbaabs so that she may witness the blessings of Eid and see the Muslims gathering.' When Umm 'Atiyah came, I asked her, 'Did you hear the Prophet (ﷺ) [say this]?' She said, 'May my father be sacrificed for him'[18] – and she never mentioned him without saying 'may my father be sacrificed for him' – 'I heard him saying that we should bring out the young girls and those who were secluded, or the young girls who were secluded, and the menstruating women so that they could witness the blessings of Eid and see the gath-**

[18] This statement is not meant in the literal sense, but rather that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was more precious to her than even her father. (Editor)

ering of the believers, but those who were menstruating were to keep away from the prayer-place itself.”[19]

The ‘young girls’ (‘awaatiq, sing. ‘aatiq) are girls who have reached adolescence or are close to it, or have reached the age of marriage or are very precious to their families, or who are spared from having to do humiliating work. It appears that they used to prevent these young girls from going out because of the corruption that arose after the first generation of Islam; but the Sahaabah did not approve of that and they thought that the ruling should remain in their time as it had been during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Where it says **“My sister was with him,”** it seems that there is something omitted, probably, **“…the woman said.”** [This is reflected in the translation above. Translator]

“Her jilbaabs,” – she should lend her some of her clothes that she does not need.

“Secluded,” – they would have a curtain in the corner of the house behind which virgins would stay.

“Menstruating women,” – huyyad, sing. haa`id – this may refer either to girls who have reached the age of puberty, or women who are having their period and are not taahir (pure).

“Menstruating women should avoid the prayer-place itself,” – Ibn al-Munayyir said: “The reason why they should avoid the prayer-place is that if they stand with the women who are praying even though they are not praying, it may appear that they have no respect for the prayer or are careless, so it better for them to avoid that.”

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[19] Saheeh al Bukhaari, 324.

It was said that the reason why menstruating women should avoid the prayer-place is as a precaution, so that women will not come near men for no reason if they are not praying, or so that they will not offend others with their blood or their odor.

The hadeeth urges everyone to attend Eid prayer, and to co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety. The menstruating woman should not forsake the remembrance of Allaah or places of goodness such as gatherings for the purpose of seeking knowledge and remembering Allaah – apart from mosques. The hadeeth also indicates that women should not go out without a jilbaab.

This hadeeth tells us that it is not proper for young women and women in seclusion to go out except for a valid reason. It states that it a woman should prepare a jilbaab, and that it is permissible to lend and borrow clothes. It also indicates that Eid prayer is obligatory (waajib).

Ibn Abi Shaybah also narrated that Ibn 'Umar used to take whoever he could of his household out to the Eid prayers.

The hadeeth of Umm 'Atiyah also states the reason for the ruling, which is so that women may witness the blessings of Eid, see the gathering of the Muslims, and share the blessings and purification of this day.

Al-Tirmidhi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his Sunan, after quoting the hadeeth of Umm 'Atiyah:

> "Some of the scholars referred to this hadeeth and allowed women to go out to the Eid prayers, and some of them disliked this. It was reported that 'Abd-Allaah ibn al-Mubaarak said: **'I do not like for women to go out to Eid prayers nowadays. If a woman insists on going out, her husband should allow**

her, but if only she goes out wearing her shabbiest clothes and not adorning herself. If she insists on adorning herself, then she should not go out. In this case the husband has the right to stop her from going out.' It was reported that 'Aa`ishah (ﷺ) said: **'If the Prophet (ﷺ) had seen what has happened to women, he would have stopped them from going to the mosques, just as the women of Bani Israa`eel (the Children of Israel- the Jews) were stopped.'** It was reported that Sufyaan al-Thawri did not like women to go to the Eid prayers in his day."[20]

Umm 'Atiyah gave her fatwaa in the hadeeth mentioned above a while after the Prophet (ﷺ) had died, and it is not reported that any of the Sahaabah disagreed with this. The words of 'Aa`ishah, **"If the Prophet (ﷺ) had seen what has happened to women, he would have stopped them from going to the mosques,"** do not contradict this (provided that women are meeting the Islamic conditions attached to their going out). It is better if permission is given only to those women who are not going to look at men or be looked at, whose attendance will not lead to anything undesirable and who are not going to rub shoulders with men on the street or in the mosque. (i.e., women whose going out will not cause fitnah or temptation to her or to men).

Men should check on their womenfolk when they go out for the prayer to make sure that their hijaab is complete, because men are the "shepherds" who are responsible for their "flock". Women should go out unadorned, without wearing perfume and being properly covered. Menstruating women should not enter the

[20] Al-Tirmidhi, 495.

mosque or prayer-place; they can wait in the car, for example, where they can hear the khutbah.

2-Aadaab al-Eid (Etiquettes of Eid)

Ghusl (Taking a Bath)

One of the etiquettes of Eid is to take a bath before going out to the prayer. It is reported in a saheeh report in al-Muwatta´ and elsewhere that ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar used to take a bath on the day of al-Fitr before coming to the prayer-place.[21]

It was reported that Sa‘eed ibn Jubayr said:

> **“Three things are Sunnah on Eid: to walk (to the prayer-place), to take a bath and to eat before coming out.”**

This is what Sa‘eed ibn Jubayr said, and he may have learned this from some of the Sahaabah.

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) mentioned that the scholars were agreed that it is mustahab to take a bath before the Eid prayer.

The reason why it is mustahab to take a bath before Friday prayer and other public gatherings also applies in the case of Eid, rather even more so.

[21] Al-Muwatta´ 428.

Eating before Coming Out

One should not come out to the prayer-place on Eid al-Fitr before eating some dates, because of the hadeeth narrated by al-Bukhaari from Anas ibn Maalik who said:

> **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) would not go out on the morning of Eid al-Fitr until he had eaten some dates… and he would eat an odd nmber."** [22]

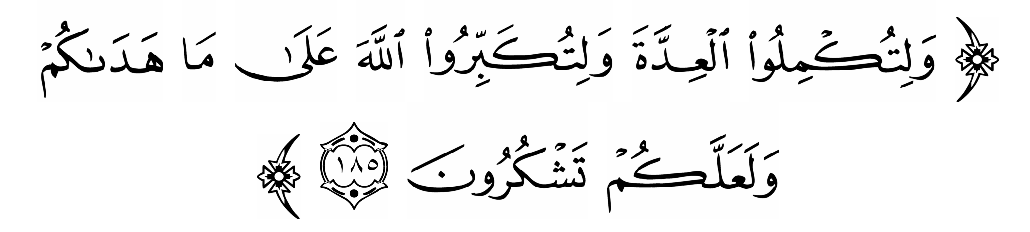
It is mustahab to eat before coming out because this confirms that we are not allowed to fast on this day, and demonstrates that the fast is now over. Ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) explained that this is to prevent people from extending the fast and it also a means of obeying the commandment of Allaah.[23] If a person does not have any dates, he can eat anything permissible for breakfast. On Eid al-Ad'haa, on the other hand, it is mustahab not to eat until after the prayer, when one should eat from the animal one sacrificed.

Takbeer on the Day of Eid

This is one of the greatest Sunnah of this day, because of the words of Allaah:

[22] Al-Bukhaari, 953.

[23] Al-Fat'h, 2/446.



"… (He [Allaah] wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allaah (say Takbeer – 'Allaahu akbar') for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him." [Surah al-Baqarah (2):185]

Al-Waleed ibn Muslim said, "I asked al-Awzaa'i and Maalik ibn Anas about saying Takbeer aloud on Eid. They said, 'Yes, 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar used to say it aloud on the day of Fitr until the imaam came out.' "

Abu 'Abd al-Rahmaan al-Sulami said: "On Eid al-Fitr they would say it louder than on Eid al-Ad'haa." Wakee' said, "i.e., the takbeer."[24]

Al-Daaraqutni and others reported that when Ibn 'Umar came out on Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Ad'haa, he would strive hard in making Takbeer until he reached the prayer-place, then he would continue making Takbeer until the imaam came.

Ibn Abi Shaybah reported with a saheeh isnaad that al-Zuhri said:

> "The people used to make Takbeer on Eid when they came out of their houses until they reached the prayer-place and until the imaam came out. When the imaam came out, they fell silent, until the imaam said Takbeer, then they said Takbeer."[25]

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[24] Irwaa´, 3/122.

[25] Irwaa´, 2/121.

The practice of making Takbeer from home to the prayer-place and until the imaam comes in was well-known among the salaf and was reported by a number of authors such as Ibn Abi Shaybah, ‘Abd al-Razzaaq and al-Firyaabi in his book Ahkaam al-‘Eidayn from a group of the salaf. An example of this is the report that Naafi’ ibn Jubayr used to make Takbeer and wondered why people did not do so. He would say to people, “Why do you not make Takbeer?” Ibn Shihaab al-Zuhri said, “The people used to make Takbeer from the time they left their homes until the imaam came in.”

The time for making Takbeer on Eid al-Fitr starts from the night of Eid until the time when the imaam comes in to lead the prayer.

The Wording of the Takbeer

Ibn Abi Shaybah reported in al-Musannaf that Ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) used to say Takbeer on the days of Tashreeq as follows:

« اللّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللّهُ أَكْبَرُ، لاَ إِلـهَ إلاَ اللّهُ. وَاللّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَللّهِ الْحَمْدُ »

“Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar, laa ilaaha ill-Allaah, wa Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar wa Lillaahi’l-hamd.”

“Allaah is Most Great… there is no god but Allaah, Allaah is Most Great, and to Allaah be praise).”

Ibn Abi Shaybah reported it elsewhere with the same isnaad, but with the phrase “Allaahu akbar” repeated three times.

Al-Muhaamili also reported that Ibn Mas'ood used to say:

« اللّه أَكْبَرُ كَبيراً ، اللّهُ أَكْبَرُ كَبيراً ، اللّه أَكْبَرُ وأَجَلُّ، اللّهُ أَكْبَرُ وللّه الحَمْدُ »

"Allaahu akbaru kabeeran, Allaahu akbaru kabeeran, Allaahu akbar wa ajall, Allaahu akbar wa Lillaahi'l-hamd."

"Allaah is Most Great of All, Allaah is Most Great of all, Allaah is most Great and Most Glorious, and to Allaah be praise."[26]

Congratulating One Another

People may exchange congratulations and good greetings on Eid, no matter what form the words take. For example they may say to one another, **"Taqabbal Allaahu minnaa wa minkum. (May Allaah accept [the fast and worship] from us and from you)," "Eid mubaarak (may it be a Blessed Eid),"** or other similar permissible greetings.

Jubayr ibn Nufayr said:

> **"At the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) when people met one another on the day of Eid, they would say:**
>
> « تَقَبَّلَ اللّهُ مِنَّا وَمِنْكُمْ »
>
> **"Taqabbal Allaahu minnaa wa minkum."**

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26 Irwaa´, 3/126.

“May Allaah accept [the fast and worship] from us and from you.”[27]

The practice of exchanging greetings was well-known at the time of the Sahaabah, and scholars such as Imaam Ahmad and others allowed it. There are reports which indicate that it is permissible to congratulate people on special occasions. The Sahaabah used to congratulate one another when something good happened, such as when [the Prophet (ﷺ) informed one of them that] Allaah accepted a person’s repentance and so on.

There is no doubt that congratulating others in this way is one of the noblest kinds of good manners and one of the highest social qualities among Muslims.

At the very least, one can return Eid greetings when they are given to you and remain silent if nothing is said, as Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “If someone congratulates me, I return the greeting, but I do not initiate it.”

Looking One’s Best for Eid

‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said:

“ ‘Umar picked up a jubbah (long outer garment) made of silk that was for sale in the market, brought it to the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) and said, ‘O Messenger of Allaah, buy this and wear it for Eid and when the delegations come.’ The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said, ‘This is

[27] Ibn Hajar. Its isnaad is hasan. Fatḩ 2/446.

the clothing of the one who has no share of the Hereafter…' "[28]

The Prophet (ﷺ) approved of 'Umar's idea of looking one's best, but he rejected and denounced the idea of buying this jubbah because it was made of silk.

Jaabir (ﷺ) said:

"The Prophet (ﷺ) had a jubbah that he would wear on Eid and on Fridays."[29]

Al-Bayhaqi reported that Ibn 'Umar used to wear his best clothes on Eid, so men should wear the best clothes they have when they go out for Eid.

Women, on the other hand, should avoid adornment when they go out for Eid, because they are prohibited from showing their adornment in front of non-mahram[30] men. A woman who wants to go out is forbidden to wear perfume or to show off in a tempting way in front of men, because she is only going out for the purpose of worship. Do you think that it is proper for a believing woman to disobey the One Whom she is going out to worship and oppose His commands by wearing attention-grabbing tight and brightly colored clothes or by putting on perfume and so on?

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[28] Reported by al-Bukhaari, 948.

[29] Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah, 1765.

[30] A **mahram** (unmaritable relation) is one whom a person is forbidden to marry at any time, due to the closeness of their relation. (Editor)

Ruling on Listening to the Eid Khutbah

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his book al-Kaafi (p. 234):

"When the imaam has said the salaam (at the end of the prayer), he should give a khutbah in two parts like the two Friday khutbahs, because the Prophet (ﷺ) did this. (The Eid khutbah) differs from the Friday khutbahs in four ways … the fourth of which is that it is Sunnah and it is not obligatory to listen to, for it was reported that 'Abd-Allaah ibn al-Saa`ib said: "I attended Eid with the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ), and when he had finished the prayer, he said:

'We are going to give a khutbah, so whoever wishes to sit (and listen) to the khutbah, let him sit down, and whoever wants to leave, let him go.'[31] "

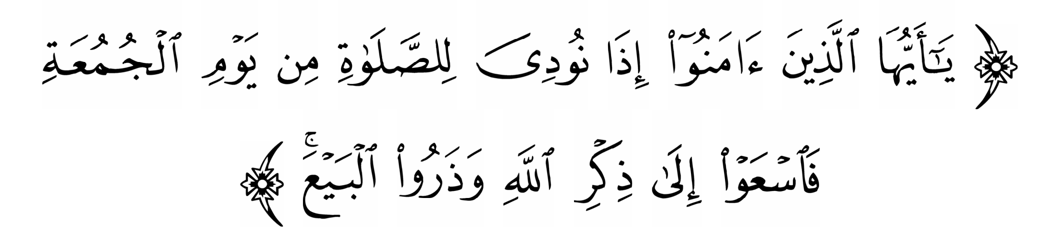
Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his book al-Majmoo' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab, p. 23:

"It is mustahab for people to listen to the khutbah, although the khutbah and listening to it are not essential conditions of the Eid prayer. But al-Shaafi'i said: 'I do not like it that someone does not listen to the khutbah of Eid, at the time of an eclipse, when prayers for rain are offered, or during Hajj, or he speaks during one of these khutbahs or leaves, but he does not have to repeat the prayer."

In al-Sharh al-Mumti' 'alaa Zaad al-Mustaqni' by Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 5/192, it says:

[31] Irwaa´ al-Ghaleel, 3/96.

“[Ibn Qudaamah’s] words, ‘like the two Friday khutbahs means that he should give two khutbahs, even though there is a dispute in this matter, as we have referred to above. The Eid khutbah is subject to the same rulings as the Friday khutbah, even to the point that speaking during it is haraam, but it is not obligatory to attend, whereas attendance at the Friday khutbah is obligatory, because Allaah says:



“O you who believe! When the call for prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah (Friday) is given, come to the remembrance of Allaah [Jumu‘ahkhutbah and prayer], and leave off business.” [Surah al-Jumu‘ah (62):9]

Attendance at the Eid khutbahs is not obligatory, and a person is allowed to leave, but if he stays he must not talk to anyone. This is what the author is refered to when he said ‘like the two Friday khutbahs’.”

One of the scholars said: “It is not obligatory to listen to the Eid khutbahs, because if it was obligatory to attend and listen to them it would be haraam to leave. But as it is permissible to leave, it is not obligatory to listen.”

Nevertheless, if talking disturbs those who are listening, it is haraam to talk because of this disturbance, not because of not listening. On this basis, if a person has a book with him during the imam’s Eid khutbah, it is permissible for him to read it, because this does not disturb anyone. But according to the madh-

hab followed by this author, it is obligatory to listen to the khutbah if one is present.

Choosing Different Routes

Jaabir ibn 'Abd-Allaah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to vary his routes on the day of Eid.[32]

It was also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to go out walking, and he prayed without any adhaan or iqaamah, then he would come back walking by a different route. It was said that this was so that the two different routes would testify in his favor on the Day of Resurrection, because on that Day the earth will speak about everything that was done on it, good and evil. It was also said that this was done in order to demonstrate the symbols and rituals of Islam along both routes; to pronounce the remembrance of Allaah; to annoy the hypocrites and Jews and to instill fear in them by the number of people who were with him; to meet the people's needs by giving fatwas, teaching them and setting an example for them to follow; to give charity to those in need; or to visit his relatives and uphold the ties of kinship.

[32] Reported by al-Bukhaari, 986.

A Caution against Wrongdoing

Some people think that Islam tells us to stay up and pray on the night of Eid, quoting an unsound hadeeth which says that, "Whoever stays up and prays on the night of Eid, his heart will not die on the day when hearts die." This hadeeth was reported with two isnaads, one of which is 'da'eef' (weak), and the other is 'very da'eef'. Islam does not tell us to single out the night of Eid for staying up and praying; if, however, a person habitually stays up and prays at night (qiyaam), there is nothing wrong with him doing so on the night of Eid as well.

Mixing of men and women in some prayer-places, streets, etc. It is a pity that this happens not only in mosques but even in the most sacred of places, al-Masjid al-Haraam [in Makkah]. Many women – may Allaah guide them – go out uncovered, wearing make-up and perfume, flaunting their adornment, when there is such serious overcrowding in the mosques – the dangers of this situation are quite obvious. So those who are in charge must organize the Eid prayers properly, by allocating separate doors and routes for women and delaying the men's departure until the women have left.

Some people get together on Eid for the purpose of singing and other forms of idle entertainment, and this is not permitted.

Some people celebrate on Eid because Ramadan is over and they no longer have to fast. This is a mistake, the believers celebrate at Eid because Allaah has helped them to complete the month of fasting, not because the fasting, which some people regard as a heavy burden, is over.

We ask Allaah to accept our worship and our repentance. May Allaah send His Peace and Blessings on our Prophet Muhammad, his family and his companions.

(*) Note: All verses in this book are interpretations of the Meanings.